HENRY SOMERVILLE,

A TALE.

VOL. II.

BRITISH MUSEUM

HENRY SOMERVILLE,

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

HARTLEBOURN CASTLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

——Dans l'avenir pour mon ame embelli
Tout me rioit, tout me flattoit d'avance;
De mes vieux ans mon fils étoit l'ami,
De ſes ſuccès j'étois enorgueilli,
J'élevois ſur ſon nom ma ſuperbe eſperance.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

HENRY SOMERVILLE.

CHAP. XVI.

BUSY Rumour flapped her wings half over the kingdom before the ſun had riſen to its next day's noon: not a lip had ſipped the morning fragrance of the tea-table, nor roſy health quaffed deep its nut-brown ale, without the ſtory of the preceding evening, without invention with its magnifying glaſs, and all the train of multiplied wonders freely taking their devious range; one had

conquered twenty deaths, and the other died a thouſand in his arms! Aſtoniſhment is, of all the other paſſions of the human breaſt, the eaſieſt raiſed;—in our early inexperienced years, when every thing breaks freſh upon the mind;—in the middle age, when we wonder becauſe we never ſaw or heard before;—and in our declining days, when we create wonders as the boaſt of our experience, and dwell on the marvellous in order to ſecure attention!

When Lord Norbury returned on the day following to Sir Francis Bloom, whom he had unfortunately left in the circle of harpies who had deeply impreſſed the mark of their talons

talons on his heart, the fame of this event had rung through every town and village, and met him as he paſſed along. When he arrived at the inn where his melancholy friend awaited him, the toaſt of Henry Somerville and Harriet Howard burſt, in reiterated ſhouts, from every room, and was joined with heartieſt merriment that played jocund round the foaming brimmer at the door. His Lordſhip could ſcarcely be ſuffered to alight, or his ſervants to attend him, before they had ſatisfied the eager curioſity of every one, to know ſomething of the health of the parties. In ſhort, if Henry Somerville had choſen at that moment to ſtand for

the county, or almoſt even to ſet up a claim to the crown, neither the influence of one party nor the rights of the other could have reſiſted the torrent of his popularity. But Henry himſelf with a glorious pride would not exchange

" Thoſe heart-ennobling ſorrows, for the lot
Of him who ſits amid the gaudy herd
Of mute barbarians bending to his nod!"

Far other fortunes attended the degraded ignominious child of folly, Sir Francis Bloom. His health had fled before he boaſted of his empty name; his honour was blighted before he had felt its influence; his virtue, at leaſt its few remaining ſparks, ſhot their feveriſh frowns upon his

his heart, while it grew callous to the nobler ſmiles of nature. Without information to invigorate his mind, without generoſity to ennoble his ſoul, and without the courage engendered by virtue, this honourable Baronet, with a ſumptuous fortune at command, with friends inclined to encourage his cheerfulneſs and honour his circle of acquaintance, and with the moſt favourable grounds for cementing friendſhips which might have rendered his days happy and enviable—was the ſlave of debauchery, the pander of low intrigue, and leſs than the foot-ſtool of avaricious extravagance. There was not a day that his profligacy did not

mark him with ruin or diſeaſe; not an hour that his contemptible weakneſs did not plunge him into the barbarous pillage of his worthleſs companions; not a moment that his folly and miſery did not burſt upon his torpid imagination the horrors of thoſe flagrant reſources by which he ſought to drown his unſtifled care! Alas! the finger of Evil had marked him for her own! She ſat a heavy night-mare upon his ſlumbers! And the croaking murmurs of the hoarſe and hungry vulture broke upon his ear, while they writhed his fluttering heart in never-ending torments of deſpair!

His fame and his fortunes, his happineſs

pineſs and his hopes of comfort, had all taken their leave; for diſcretion and reſolution belonged to a family with whom he was a ſtranger. Thus, whenever folly takes entire poſſeſſion of the heart,

"Farewell to virtue's peaceful times,
Soon will you ſtoop to act the crimes
Which thus you ſtoop to fear;
Guilt follows guilt, and where the train
Begins with wrongs of ſuch a ſtrain,
What horrors form the rear!"

AKENSIDE.

How many thouſands read, and hear and ſee, theſe inſtances of miſery created by themſelves, and ſtill like madmen purſue their vain career!

Lord Norbury needed not the example; but it was his lot, from

long acquaintance, and the early zeal of friendſhip never forgotten in riper years, to ſhew thoſe unrequited ſervices which were denied by every other friend Sir Francis had, or now deſerved.

When his Lordſhip entered the room, he found him leaning his face on his hand, which he tried in vain to hide: his body bending over the table, his linen unchanged, his hair uncombed, his garters hanging unfiniſhed from his open knees, diſcovered the air of miſery and woe more truly than ever poet's fancy dreamed. As he raiſed his head, his countenance wore a pale and livid hue; his eyes ſunk and dead, and his lips

lips parched. As Lord Norbury approached him and was drawing a chair to his ſide, he was interrupted by ſome haſty footſteps on the ſtair-caſe, followed by the entrance of a large ill-looking man, with an oaken club in his hand, about ſeven feet high and half as many broad, whoſe looks painted him to be one of thoſe aſſiduous adminiſtrators of juſtice who live upon the miſeries of mankind!

"I won't ſtay no longer, by G—d! Come, Sir Francis, the chaiſe waits at the door, and I have got ſix other warrants to do when I get to London, and I can't ſtay no longer!"

"Good Heavens!" cried Lord

Norbury, "how is all this?" "Why, Sir—my Lord, I aſk your Honour's pardon—but I have been here a-waiting long enough; and unleſs you have got nine hundred and twelve pound ten and ſix-pence, for the debt and coſts, to diſcharge this execution, he muſt go to town along with me — and there's my proper warrant."

"'Tis hard, indeed," ſaid his Lordſhip, "you did not take his goods—"

"Goods!—Goods indeed! Why, for that matter—why, it's a ſign you have not been in Brook-ſtreet lately! Why, all his goods have been ſeized long ago; and, what's worſe than all that,

that, Will Stopgap told me, as I was ſtanding a night or two ago in the Bailey, that there was a little matter of a rape."—His Lordſhip frowned, and ſtarted back a few paces.

"Aye, your Honour may frown at me, but he'll find it true!" "Is there any thing elſe againſt him, friend?" aſked his Lordſhip.

"Why, as to that matter," anſwered Jack Blunt, "perhaps there may, when I come to ſearch the office."

"Oh, horror! horror!" exclaimed Sir Francis:—"But where is Armſtrong? Perhaps he—" "No, no," interrupted Blunt—"you have got the wrong ſow by the ear there!—

Pleaſe your Lordſhip, that's a gull as won't bite."

"What do you mean?" ſaid Lord Norbury; "I don't underſtand you."

"Oh, don't you? Why, we have had at him already! No, no, he has fairly bilked us! He thought that Sir Francis would apply to him, 'cauſe how he has won a good ſlice of his ſtuff; but as ſoon as he ſaw me come in, he ſmelt a rat, and ordered his horſes; and before I could well come and touch my man, 'ſquire Armſtrong was off."

"How came he to know you? Did you tell your buſineſs to *him?*" ſaid Lord Norbury.

"Ha? ha?—No, my Lord—Who does

does that in our profeſſion? Mum's the word with us, my Lord.—Sometimes we ſmoke a man in a corner, by not letting nobody know who we are after. Why, you would not think now that I have got here in this pocket-book warrants to the amount of ſome thouſands, all to be done afore Term; and if we were to let the cat out of the bag, what would the ſheriff ſay to us? No, no, my Lord!—We could take your own ſon from your preſence, and you not know why nor wherefore."

"Indeed!"

"Aye, my Lord, indeed: why, I was here laſt week 'ſtraining on a farmer—it 'moſt broked my heart, it

did—how his poor wife did cry, ſurely! and nobody need ha' known nothing of it but for her crying—and ſhe was but delivered of twins three days afore—and there was not enough neither, to pay all as we wanted, ſo we left them without any ſtick nor ſtock;—and when all came to all, it comed out to be the very father of the girl as Sir Francis——But I aſk your pardon, Sir Francis; perhaps nothing may come of it; there's many a way to get off, you know, at our Bailey; ſo I'd never die dung-hill. Now I'll be bold to ſay, that there never was an act of parliament made but a good whip could drive a coach and ſix through it. But

come,

come, Sir Francis, upon my ſoul we muſt be off."

Sir Francis heaved a deep ſigh.

Lord Norbury, who was petrified and oppreſſed by what he heard, could ſcarcely reſtrain his indignation, though he heſitated on which of the two objects before him to let it vent: it was impoſſible to offer any relief in ſuch a caſe; and the moſt ſerious evil of all was a crime which Sir Francis muſt anſwer ſolely for himſelf.

Sir Francis raiſed himſelf from his ſeat, and, preſſing his Lordſhip's hand—"If this moment," ſaid he, "ſhould be the laſt in which we may ever meet, do not think me un-

mindful of your undeſerved friend-ſhip; it will be the only comfort I now have to carry with me to the grave! Would this were the laſt moment! I have ill deſerved your kindneſs, and have requited them worſe! I was in hopes that this interview would have been ſpared!—If you have a ſword, Norbury, plunge it here," baring his beating boſom—" for I—"

" Be comforted, Sir," ſaid his Lordſhip.—" No, never!—comfort I am not entitled to, it has left me for ever; what I feel muſt ſoon complete *my* trial; Heaven will ſhield you with virtue to endure *yours*."

His Lordſhip, aſtoniſhed at this lan-

language, and the haggard eye with which he gazed upon him and then ſhrunk from him, requeſted Blunt to allow them a few minutes pauſe together. "Something oppreſſes his mind," ſaid his Lordſhip; "it may ſave his life to explain it."

"No!" replied Jack, "I never word a man when he's in company; if he has any thing to ſay, let him ſay it afore me—he need not be afraid of me, I never tell."

"Give me your orders," ſaid Lord Norbury; "they ſhall be punctually fulfilled."

"Oh, my Lord!" ſtarting back as he was proceeding, ſhuddering at the bare utterance of his ſecret—

"I have

" I have a tale to unfold which time does not now permit. I have been wholly in the power of Armſtrong—he is fluſhed with ſome late ſucceſſes he has gained—he broke in upon me during your abſence, and, under promiſe of concealing the very crime which Blunt has juſt mentioned, engaged me in a plot, which my information materially ſerved to promote, before he ruſhed into the accompliſhment of it.—But the time runs on! I dare not name it!—Oh, mercy, Heaven!—I go to certain miſery!"—Then breaking abruptly from his Lordſhip—"Fly, my Lord, with every ſpeed in life, if you would ſave—Fanny Somerville."

His

His Lordſhip ſtarted with an agony not to be deſcribed: he followed Sir Francis to the door of the houſe, entreating a word more in explanation. "I dare not further," ſaid the wretched culprit. Blunt lifted him into a chaiſe and four horſes, which was out of ſight in an inſtant.

Agitated and aſtoniſhed beyond example, Lord Norbury felt himſelf called upon by every obligation of honour, had he not a more ſenſitive inducement, to ruſh forward to the field of action with the utmoſt expedition; and having loaded his ſervants' piſtols and procured another

pair

pair for his own pocket, diſcharged the account with his hoſt, and purſued his anxious journey to Mr. Somerville's houſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

WHEN Henry arrived at home after his adventure at the Park, he withdrew to his ſilent chamber, ſtill indulging the luxury of reflection, which had rendered the way ſhort and the time momentary. His family, ſtill locked in the arms of gentle ſlumber, had been perhaps the only one within ſome miles' circuit who had yet the tale to learn; but before the ſocial breakfaſt ſummoned the happy circle together, the plough-boy had heard it at the turnpike, the threſher had told it to the looker,

the

the looker to the dairy-maid—thence to the cook—thence rolling like a ſnow-ball, augmenting its maſs as it touched on every tongue, till the chamber-maid ran in to wake the young ladies, who retailed it again to their father and mother.

Mrs. Somerville, who very juſtly thought there was not ſuch another young man in all the four quarters of the globe, flew in diſorder to her ſon's apartment, where ſhe found him in a tranquil ſleep.—She gazed upon him for a few moments, kiſſed the dew upon his manly forehead, and retired without diſturbing him.

The breakfaſt was delayed, and at length Henry made his appearance.

"Henry!"

" Henry!" exclaimed Mrs. Somerville as he entered the room, " are you wounded?" and haſtily ſpringing towards him examined his arm, which he had not unfolded. It had been bound up in a white handkerchief, which Mr. Howard had picked up from the floor, ſuppoſing it to have been Henry's: true, it was marked with an H; but there were two H's, which could not apply to Henry nor to Mr. Howard, whoſe name was Charles. A glow of noble animation tinted Henry's countenance—Fanny ſmiled. The ſwelling had entirely ſubſided, but the bruiſe appeared violent though not ſerious. Mrs. Somerville dreſſed it

with

with ſome reſtorative herb, and bound it up again in the ſame handkerchief. "Do you feel this now?" ſaid ſhe to her ſon, with a look of tender ſolicitude. "Indeed, my deareſt mother," looking upon the handkerchief, "I do feel it very ſenſibly"—tears mingling with his joy.

They took their ſeats as Mr. Somerville entered. "Why, George tells me you had nearly been killed laſt night—it might have been quite as well you had paſſed your evening at home, Mr. Henry;—but let us hear your ſtory."

Henry then related the particulars, reſtraining nothing of his mind relative to Harriet, and of his exul-

tation

tation at finding their attachment mutual. When encircled with friends, the heart diſcloſes itſelf without diſguiſe or reſerve; all its intricacies are laid open, and we are enabled to form a juſt eſtimate of its real bent and character. Henry availed himſelf of this occaſion to ſpeak out all the raptures of his ſoul, which had hitherto been ſuppreſſed: frequently he interrupted his ſhort narrative by deſcriptions of the manner, the dreſs, the elegance of perſon, the voice, the all of the only woman in the world—"But," added Henry, "though no human power can prevent us from tenderly loving one another, I could perceive in all Mr. Howard's civility

a cautious regard to avoid every encouragement that could lead me to any converſation with him on the ſubject."

"That was impoſſible," ſaid his father; "the place and the company preſent were ill ſuited to ſuch a converſation."

"None ſo eligible as that moment!" anſwered Henry; "the ſcene had been tranſacted before them—there was no diſguiſing the truth—Harriet could not faint on purpoſe—I could not deſign to be attacked and abuſed—the ruffians who ſlunk away in ſhame could not have preconcerted their parts;—all was natural, unexpected, and we the chief

performers

performers knew nothing previouſly of the piece we were to perform: What a moment for a father to have—Oh, Sir! had you been Mr. Howard—" ſtifling his emotions.

"My deareſt child!" ſaid Mrs. Somerville placing her hand upon his ſhoulder—

"But I have often ſaid," continued he, "how different the world in general live, to what we do. Lord Norbury continued with me from the firſt; he ſeemed to ſhew the utmoſt ſolicitude about the event, and the immediate attentions neceſſary. I thought I diſcovered more in his countenance than I had ever done before. He told me that Harriet

had recovered, but that ſhe could not, after what had paſſed, make her appearance again that evening, and had therefore retired to her chamber: it was time then for me to retire alſo."

"Well, my dear Henry," ſaid his father, "you know all my opinions on theſe matters: we ſhall ſoon ſee what Mr. Howard thinks of this affair: and we may be well aſſured that nothing but difference of ſtation can divide our opinions. Such men as he, who have ſenſible minds and underſtand the better ways to ſocial happineſs, have every opportunity of promoting it; but ſelf love in high life is ſo much flattered by the magnificence of houſes, richneſs of dreſs

and

and furniture, and ſplendour of living, and the general court paid to them, that it is ſcarcely poſſible to find inſtances where theſe are not the undoubted cauſes of that ſeparation of ranks of people, which has always created the envy and kept up the diſſenſions among mankind; and few men of the firſt ſenſe are ſtrong enough to reſiſt theſe deluſive marks of happineſs: they are like perfumes or concerts of muſic, very pleaſing in the enjoyment; but a man can know little of true comfort who cannot live without them: as to real happineſs, there is no compariſon between all this and our ſtations; for,

if theſe are not brightened by gaiety and ſplendour, they are always unclouded; our days paſs on in a ſucceſſion of mild and pleaſing ſenſations, which equally exclude intemperate pleaſure as poignant grief. I am, on this ground, rather doubtful, whether, if you were to marry this girl to-morrow, you would find the happineſs you dream of. She will want ſplendour, you will want retirement;—ſhe will call for her carriage, while you are looking for your ſpade. What a ſplendid figure Henry Somerville, Eſq. will make in his half-boots and hob-nails, his ſlouched hat and his tan-burnt face, marching into

into the centre of his lady's drawing-room, amid feathers, painted faces, muſlin trains, and all the ſoft luxuries of an Aſiatic ſeraglio! Your wife will, moſt aſſuredly, not be pleaſed with your ruſtic philoſophy; and it will be too late then to ſay you thought otherwiſe."

"Well, Sir," ſaid Henry, "let me be put to the trial; if both of us are led by the ſample of laſt night, and agree to go half way towards each other's inclination, we ſhall ſhew you what our philoſophy is."

"God proſper you, my boy!" ſaid his father.

Breakfaſt being long ſince at an

end, they all adjourned to the farm, leaving Fanny, who had undertaken to finish the female part of the fables in which they were all soon to appear.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE family at the Park did not aſſemble till near noon. Mr. Howard had choſen to reflect uninterruptedly on the events of the preceding evening, as they affected his family: he found that his eſteem for his friend was not ſhaken by this unfortunate attachment of his ſon; that his daughter had ſhewn her ſentiments undiſguiſed, and that he had little to queſtion on that head; that though Mr. Somerville's ancient family had been more reſpectable than the preſent, he had no foundation for their riſing now to any com-

petition with their anceſtry ; they had filled reſpectable poſts in the honourable profeſſions of law, divinity, and arms—had riſen to high rank in them all, but without hereditary diſtinctions or connections: that the education he had given his daughter entitled her to a coronet, which ſhe now ſeemed to deſpiſefor the embraces of a man truly worthy, but next above a peaſant: that old Somerville was eſteemed rich, but had no entailed eſtates deſcendible to his family ; and if he had, his ſon was of a hail vigorous conſtitution, and ſtood as fair for long days as his children : that though his daughter was a year or two older than Henry, yet, if he gave his conſent to

their

their union now, ſhe might in another year have good cauſe to change her mind, and charge him with not having conſulted her welfare: that next winter ſhe was to be introduced at court, would there ſhine among the firſt and faireſt honours of her country, and add dignity and delight to his name, his fortune, and his family.—Could the wife of Henry Somerville be introduced? He trembled at the thought—ſtarted from his chair, and, pacing haſtily to and fro acroſs his ſtudy, formed his reſolution in the determined impoſſibility of his ever conſenting to ſuch an union.

In this ſtate of mind Mr. Howard prepared to join his wife and daugh-

ters, with no very prominent features of encouragement.

"Allow me, my dear Harriet," ſaid he, "to aſk you whether you have ever known Mr. Henry Somerville's ſituation of mind towards you, or have paſſed any converſation or correſpondence with him?"

"None, Sir, in the light you mean."

"Be open, my dear child: I wiſh to learn the real ſtate of the matter between you before I form any determination. Have you had any real cauſe to think that your evident partiality is well placed?"

"Yes, many, Sir; but never by any converſation or letters."

"By

"By ſome meſſages then, or through the favour of your waiting-woman, perhaps?"

"No, no, Sir; you muſt entertain but a poor opinion of your daughter, to think that ſhe would ſtoop ſo low as to form her preference from channels ſo inferior!"

"You have found ſome opportunities of meeting then?"

"Moſt aſſuredly, but not in ſecret: neither Henry nor myſelf, if I know him rightly, would condeſcend to any meaſure that was not open; but when we have met, it has been only when the intercourſe of our families offered. Nothing like pro-

profeſſions ever dropped from his lips; nothing like what we are taught to call aſſiduities ever diſgraced him."

"An odd way of making love, I think, his muſt have been!" ſaid her father.

"No, my deareſt Sir!—his growing affections needed no language to make them known; his feelings required no profeſſions to declare them; if he had taken recourſe to any thing ſo unnatural, Henry Somerville would never have been mine!"

"Aſtoniſhing!" ſaid Mr. Howard, "This is a ſtyle of romance I did not expect from you! I remember the day when you have ſpoken with much

much reſpect of the attentions paid you by Lord Norbury and Lord Farrington, and others."

"'Tis all true," returned Harriet; "but I never ſpoke, or could ſpeak with reſpect, of Henry:—to you, Sir, and my beloved mother, I can and will freely ſay, that the attentions we receive in the uſual way can be put down to no other account than reſpect or politeneſs; and this is the utmoſt they merit. Theſe you have mentioned are very excellent men, but there is ſomething more that muſt intereſt our hearts. I ſee that you are ſurpriſed at what I ſay: why ſhould it be thought extraordinary that I cannot deſcribe to you in words,

words, that which ſpeaks in the eye and in the heart, a ſilent but more impreſſive language than the tongue has yet acquired the power to expreſs?—If I had felt a reſpect for Henry, as I have done for theſe gentlemen, I had never loved him.'

"But I want to know from whence this ſilent love you ſpeak of originated; for, perhaps, if I were to aſk him the ſame queſtion, he would adopt your language, and talk to me of the ſparks he had ſeen in your eye that lighted up his flame?"

"That I dare engage he would not," anſwered ſhe: "the honeſt ſimplicity of his heart would very openly confeſs, that your queſtion

was

was the firſt moment he had ever ſtopped to enquire. How often, Sir, have I heard you ſay, that it was by ſome of the finer fibres of the ſoul that the affections are held together! Can it therefore be eaſy to trace them to their root? I can trace mine to their parent ſtem; beyond that, others muſt try to account. The kindneſs of both of you has made me what I am: if it had been leſs, I had never poſſeſſed thoſe finer fibres which have taught me to feel the juſt diſtinction between true love and the ſemblance of it."

"This is avowing then your fixed reſolution pretty clearly!" ſaid her father.

"To

" To pretend, Sir, to conceal from you what you ſaw was ſo involuntarily declared to all the world laſt night, would be the moſt ridiculous thing on earth; but, Sir, allow me to hope that my happineſs and yours will never be ſeparated, and, whatever may be my future deſtiny—"

" As to that, Harriet," interrupted Mr. Howard, " you will eaſily conceive that I have formed no ſuch attachment to Henry, though I accord him all the merit he poſſeſſes: and that I could not have ſeen you arrive at a period of life when a connection honourable and ſuitable to your fortune would be very deſirable,

able, without earneſtly wiſhing to promote it."

"It is not there," ſaid Harriet, "I ſhall ever expect to find my happineſs."

"But," ſaid her father, "it may be there I ſhall expect you to ſeek it."

"But, Sir, I muſt then get rid of ideas I have cheriſhed too long."

"And I, Harriet, muſt on the other hand get rid of thoſe I have cheriſhed from the hour you was born!"

"Sir, they were the ideas of glory and fortune, ſplendour, and the great magnificence of high rank: they have their charms, 'tis true; but ſome-

ſomething aſſures me, from all I ſee and hear, that they do not produce happineſs;—the men are not true—the women are not, cannot be kind—ſincerity is unknown—marriages are formed not for mutual affection, but mutual dignity;—how can they be happy?"

"What!" ſaid Mrs. Howard, "is there no happineſs in being introduced with a title—in precedence—in contributing to the ſplendour and flower of a court?"

"Yes, my dear mother, there is a wonderful charm in all this; but there are many contraſts to overbalance it, which almoſt every high family feels, that often ſhew a woman's

woman's beating heart under all her gaudy dreſs."

"You have acquired an unjuſt opinion of the men," ſaid her mother.

"You have been liſtening to ſome nonſenſical creature as ignorant as——"

"Indeed, Sir, I have not!—Look at Sir Francis Bloom: he was going to marry about five years ago; but his character was found out in time to prevent the miſery of the woman he pretended an attachment to, and which was in fact only to her purſe. How many ſuch does the town abound with at this time, whoſe appearance and manners are the ſame with

with the moſt exalted characters you can name; and who, as far as I ſee, are equally well received by the moſt ſcrupulous! In ſuch a mixed company young women may eaſily be deceived, for there is no diſtinction made between the beſt and the moſt ſhameful: and ſuppoſe my ſiſter or myſelf were to give our hands to one of theſe ſhocking creatures, would all their ſplendour make us or you happy?"

"You talk on the ſubject very fluently," ſaid Mr. Howard: "pray how came you ſo intimately acquainted with it?"

"I have already ſaid that my information ariſes from what I have obſerv-

ed; and when you conſider, Sir, that I have been nearly five years introduced as your daughter, and have in that time been engaged in the intimate habits of intercourſe with ſo large a part of the nobility as you are acquainted with, and with ſo many other families of diſtinction; it is impoſſible but that the crowd of their follies, irregularities and diſtreſſes, of which it is the ſtrange faſhion to make a public boaſt rather than to conceal, muſt have come within my obſervation. I would not make partial compariſons, but I find none of them in a more retired ſtation."

"I underſtand you well," interrupted

rupted her father; "but you are wrong to have formed ſo ſtrong a prejudice: and let me tell you, that I have found as warm friendſhips and as virtuous men in the higher ranks of ſociety, where ſituation and fortune raiſe men above the temptation of low and groveling vices, as can ever be found in the inferior orders."

"I don't know them," rejoined Harriet; "I meant the vices of the higher orders."

"You may rely upon it, that as all mankind are alike, they are all ſubject to the ſame defects."

"Then we ought never to marry at all."

"My

"My dear Harriet," ſaid Mr. Howard, reſuming a more ſerious tone, "you muſt allow me to be the guardian of your future welfare as well as your preſent.—Do you heſitate to truſt yourſelf with me? Although our opinions differ a little, I am ſure you will by and by think with me; you have certainly flattered this young man too much, and have made all the world believe your attachment inſeparable;—after a few days' reflection—"

Harriet ſhook her head in ſilence—"A change of ſcene," continued Mr. Howard, "becomes neceſſary, that this ſilly incident may blow over." Harriet ſtarted—Her father

took his hat—" At ſuch a moment as this you would not," ſaid Harriet, propoſe a journey?"

" Not to-day, nor to-morrow," anſwered he; " but as I ſee no fair proſpect or propriety of encouraging this affair to proceed, I think the moſt prudent ſtep is to change the ſcene of action."

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

IN every eye, as he rode along, Mr. Howard ſaw the prepoſſeſſed expectation, that the affair was determined without an objection; he felt, that to oppoſe it was to oppoſe the efforts of ſtruggling nature: he juſtified himſelf in the almoſt unanimous approbation of every man of rank he knew; but this was a faint authority when oppoſed againſt the unprejudiced expreſſion of every countenance he met with.

As the road led paſt the farm, Mr. Howard called there to enquire

for his friend before he rode further, and was directed to him in the granary. Henry, with reſpectful acknowledgment, thanked him for his great civility, which Mr. Howard received with polite diſtance; it ſtopped him from hearing the whole of Henry's open heart. Mr. Somerville ſaid, he had great cauſe to add apology to his ſon's acknowledgment for the interruption he had cauſed to the entertainment; but that, as no one but himſelf appeared to have ſuffered in the affray, he might hope Mr. Howard would forget it."

" I wiſh," ſaid Mr. Howard, " there were not other cauſes which will I fear make me remember it long:

long: my daughter has been greatly agitated, and is now confined to the houſe; and the prodigious notice which the circumſtance attracted upon her, is, you know, ſufficient alone to alarm a female mind."

"She is not indiſpoſed, I hope?" ſaid Henry. "Oh, no! by no means," anſwered he; "ſhe has been converſing with me this morning as freely as if nothing had happened. My mind is much occupied," continued he, "on the ſubject; and as ſome remarks were dropped by Henry laſt night, which ſeemed to ſhew particular ſentiments towards my daughter, which I confeſs rather ſurpriſed me, I was deſirous of availing

myſelf of this viſit, which the late event in your family would otherwiſe have produced, to underſtand ſomething in explanation."

" I am ſorry," ſaid Mr. Somerville, " that any thing which has paſſed ſhould have given you concern, or have induced you to open your reaſonable expectation that Henry ſhould explain himſelf in ſo formal a manner;—but he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf—I know his heart is full, he'll thank you for the opportunity of pouring out more of his burden."

" I cannot heſitate a moment, Sir," ſaid Henry, " to tell you, what you muſt already know, that my tender affection

affection for your daughter was the cauſe of my imprudence; but I thought myſelf ſecure from all obſervation in a ſpot where I could gratify my fondeſt feelings without even herſelf knowing it. I have long cheriſhed for her a love, which, from a difference of ſtation and fortune, I dared not avow: not a ſoul under heaven but myſelf ever heard from my lips a ſentiment in her praiſe; nor had I ever diſcloſed the ſecret, though it had worn me to the grave, until I ſhould have diſcovered ſomething from her which would have encouraged me to ſpeak. But now, Sir, that I have been honoured with holding in my arms the faint-

ing effuſions of a paſſion as ſincere as my own, witneſſed among teſtimonies without number, I ceaſe not to think of it, and to ſpeak of it as the firſt gift of Heaven: and no oppoſing power on earth—"

"Stop there, if you pleaſe!" ſaid Mr. Howard; "there may be powers on earth whom it may be quite as honourable to conſult as to oppoſe."

"Pardon me, Sir!" ſaid Henry; "my ſole idea was, that I would try in any manner my ſuperior claims, againſt the vain pretenſions of any one who might value himſelf on hopes of his own creating. I have too much veneration for domeſtic

affection,

affection, in which it has been my chief bleſſing to have lived, to ſlight yourſelf or Mrs. Howard ſo far as not to ſolicit, at a ſuitable period, what from all other men I ſhould claim as my undoubted right; and I call it a right, becauſe it has ſo recently been confirmed to me."

"But I hope," ſaid Mr. Howard, "that this claim will be ſupported by ſomething more ſubſtantial than mere airy attachment: paſſion cannot laſt for ever, Mr. Henry; and we have lived a little longer than yourſelf, and know very well that when theſe ebullitions have paſſed away, which they will ſoon do, there muſt be a foundation previouſly laid

future comfort; and all the uſual habits of life muſt be ſecured, or diſſenſion ſuperſedes this heighday of the ſoul."

"Sir, I may perhaps ſpeak too warmly; but on ſuch a ſubject, and on ſuch an occaſion, it would be culpable to be cool: however, I have felt what I now feel long enough to have thought about it too coolly, to warrant the epithet you were pleaſed to put upon my attachment when you called it airy:—as to my fortune, you know the little independence I have by my uncle's will—under my preſent ſituation my grandfather has left me all his eſtates, charged with heavy mortgages for money raiſed

raiſed to purchaſe annuities on his life: what little remains I have declared and ſolemnly vow ſhall be divided with my family: if you can do me the injuſtice to ſuppoſe that my attachment was built or encouraged by a dependance on Miſs Howard's fortune, let me aſk you what dependance you can imagine her to have placed upon mine? You cannot think ſhe was ever ſordid—whoſe ſoul, as her perſon, is purity itſelf.—Sir, if it were poſſible you ſhould withhold from her all or part of your original intentions, can you ſuppoſe for a moment that two people united under circumſtances ſo auſpicious to their mutual happineſs,

with a ſmall certainty of my own to provide the firſt comforts, ſhould not be ſucceſsful?"

Mr. Howard ſmiled—"I ſee," ſaid he, "that you are ready to find every argument; but, Sir, I thank you for thus openly diſcloſing your mind. I confeſs I did not expect," turning to Mr. Somerville, "that this would have been the reſult of our old acquaintance."

"You regret it then?" ſaid Henry haſtily —"Have the goodneſs, Mr. Howard, to let me know as openly your objections: are they to my family, my fortune, my ſituation?—I entreat you, Sir, let me hear all you diſapprove. I ſhall eſteem it as advice,

advice, by which I may render myſelf more worthy of the prize."

" I fear my objections," anſwered Mr. Howard, " will not appear, either in your father's eyes or yours, of ſufficient weight to overturn that romantic attachment raiſed in this retirement, which has thus ſequeſtered you from that world in which my girl has alone been educated to move."

" I know too well, Sir," ſaid Henry, " that our different ſtations poſſeſs your mind more than any other obſtacle, and againſt this I confeſs I lie at your mercy; but let it not be decided by your judgment who are not to partake of it: if that

or any other objection dwell upon your daughter's mind, I bow with unfeigned deference, and ſubmit—but, Sir, ſhe will make me the man ſhe pleaſes—her wiſh will be my law."

Mr. Howard was unable to parry this tide of ſincerity, which bore down all he had to offer. Finding himſelf foiled in every point he had urged, nothing but a final diſſent remained to put an end to a connection, his pride and ambition urged him to diſapprove. After ſome pauſe he roſe haſtily from his ſeat, and taking Mr. Somerville by the hand, "I hope, moſt earneſtly hope," ſaid he, "that this affair between our

young people may not in the leaſt degree affect our old friendſhip; but I fear it muſt not proceed—our views are ſo different, and our intentions for our children, with every principle of their education, founded on ſo different a baſis." And without waiting an anſwer, which he dreaded, he ſtepped haſtily forward out of the granary. While he was deſcending the ladder, a phaeton with four in hand drove furiouſly paſt, followed by two ſervants, after whom, covered with duſt and ſweat, in full ſpeed rode Lord Norbury and his groom, with their piſtols cocked, and calling out to the driver to ſtop if he would ſave his life. The violent

agitation

agitation and ſcreams of the lady abſorbed every attention, and in a moment Mr. Somerville, Henry, Mr. Howard, and every man in the farm-yard, ruſhed out to aſſiſt in overtaking them.

The opprobrious epithets of villain! coward! with ſcreams, oaths and imprecations, rent the air, till at length the horſes ruſhing upon a bank in as much terror as any of the parties, threw the lady ſeveral feet diſtance into an adjoining field. She fell without injury, except the agitation natural to female delicacy. The driver, whoſe ſkill enabled him to keep the reins and his ſeat, recovered the level of the road; and,

enflamed

enflamed with rage and vexation at the loſs of his lady, and the utter impoſſibility of holding in his horſes, contrived to fire his piſtol in the very moment that Lord Norbury (whom the delay occaſioned by the accident had brought nearer to him) did the ſame. The noiſe of the double fire, and the driver having received a wound in his right arm below the elbow, which diſabled him, gave the horſes new terror and new power; they tore every part of the carriage to pieces, and daſhed the charioteer from his ſeat almoſt lifeleſs upon the ground. Lord Norbury, who was ignorant of what fate had purſued the lady, ſent his ſervants on to protect the fugitive,

tive, while he returned to a more valuable and intereſting charge.

Mr. Somerville, alarmed and aſtoniſhed at ſeeing his daughter in ſo unfortunate and unaccountable a ſituation, in vain demanded the cauſe:—her ſenſes had left her for a while:—as ſoon as nature had revived, ſhe looked in her father's face for pity and protection. Mrs. Somerville by this time had joined them; and as they were endeavouring to ſupport Fanny to the houſe, Lord Norbury arrived with all the deſpair and wretchedneſs that a worthy man may be ſuppoſed to feel under the keen apprehenſions of having, though in a cauſe of juſtice,

ſent

ſent a fellow creature to the expanſe of eternity, with all his ſins upon his head. Unaccuſtomed to the fatigue he had undergone both of body and mind, his exhauſted ſpirits required almoſt as much aſſiſtance as the object of his care. He was unable to unfold the myſtery which covered the event.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

AFTER ſome conſiderable time, Fanny related, that Mr. Armſtrong, whom ſhe remembered to have once dined with at her grandfather's, having called to viſit her father, ſhe had acquainted him that the whole family were at the farm except herſelf; that he had appeared very ſolicitous to ſee him, and had preſſed her to allow him the honour of driving her thither, which ſhe had, after ſome heſitation, conſented to; that his converſation on the way was general, the diſtance being ſo ſhort that it could

could only admit of desultory remarks on the weather, his horses, and the pleasure of driving; "all which," added Fanny, "prepossessed me with no very sudden thoughts in his favour:—but when I shewed him where to turn, and found him quicken his pace and drive beyond the lane, I began to take alarm, and summoned courage to request he would stop, as I had no desire to go further.—It was at this moment that my Lord overtook us, and, demanding of him to stop as he galloped up to the carriage, the horses set off in the manner you have all seen."

"I am utterly at a loss," said Mrs. Somerville, "to see how Lord

Norbury

Norbury came to be acquainted with this circumſtance ſo as to be prepared:—'tis evident that he already knew of ſome raſcally deſign in Armſtrong, or he never would have been prepared to attack him."

When his Lordſhip had recovered a little, he ſatisfied their anxious doubts, and very agreeably ſurpriſed the whole circle by an explicit avowal of his own feelings. "The many delightful opportunities," ſaid he, "which my worthy friend Mr. Howard has offered me of ſeeing and knowing ſo much of this excellent family, are but the ſecondary cauſes of my higheſt eſteem; but the extraordinary merit I have found here,"

here," looking towards Fanny, whoſe countenance was hid in down-caſt modeſty, " has long made its laſting impreſſion upon me—an impreſſion which would very ſoon have diſcloſed itſelf, had not the folly and villany of the deteſtable Sir Francis Bloom, in the moment of his ruin, diſcloſed to me the iſſue of a ſecret plot of wickedneſs, and charged me to fly, if I would ſave her whom, I am free to ſay, I hold moſt dear."

Aſtoniſhment and delight were depicted in every eye. Mrs. Somerville held her daughter's hand trembling with the agitation of native delicacy. She had admired his Lordſhip, but had never thought of loving him; his

his rank and ſuperior life were ingredients in his character which had ſet it above the level of her expectations or hopes: high life had been one of the continual ſubjects of her father's denunciations; but rank and fortune, when united with virtue and honour, are bleſſings in human life which neither man nor woman has power to reſiſt: yet, whatever be the ſituation of either party, the man is, and muſt ever be, and ought to feel and acknowledge himſelf to be, the obliged party. If beauty, if the trueſt delicacy of ſentiment, if every other female charm, excepting thoſe artificial embelliſhments which the manners of refined life teach us to

value,

value, can be conceived to render any woman amiable in the ſight of man, here they were concentred:— for among all the gentler ſex, whoſe conſtant aim is to improve the beauty of the outward form, and who ſubdue all mankind by their charms, nature had been laviſh of her indulgence, and Fanny had been taught to ſtudy nature only.

How often would Lord Norbury repeat among his ſilent reveries the words of the poet he loved:

"How often, to myſelf unknown,
"The graceful, gentle, virtuous maid
"Have I admired! How often ſaid,
"What joy to call a heart like hers one's own!"

The ſervants now returned, and reported that they had aſſiſted in placing Mr. Amſtrong upon a bed at a neighbouring inn, and had left a ſurgeon with him, who had been ſent for from the village cloſe by; that his leg was fractured and his arm much injured—that when he was come to himſelf, he raved, and ſwore eternal vengeance againſt My Lord for ruining all his plan, and that he hoped one day to meet him face to face:—that the ſurgeon had pacified him by the ſtrongeſt aſſurances that ſuch feelings would prevent his recovery, and that they had all left him to repoſe.

"Repoſe!" ſaid Henry. "Let him know

know I'll help him to his repoſe myſelf, as ſoon as—" "For ſhame!" ſaid his mother; "I muſt deſire that none of you interfere—By the bleſſing of God, we have our dear girl reſtored to us—would you break up our peace, and ruſh into deſtruction?"

"No, no!" ſaid Lord Norbury, "Henry muſt aſk leave of many more now than he thinks for." They walked to Mr. Somerville's houſe—Fanny leaning on her mother's arm;—but the paſſing ſcene filled them with ideas which reſtrained their converſation.

Mr. Somerville, however, received from Lord Norbury a more particular hiſtory of the ſituation of the

diſgraced Baronet, and the intimations he had given him of Armſtrong's infamous intentions.

"You ſee, Sir," ſaid Henry to Mr. Howard, "that Lord Norbury does not think it unworthy to avow his predilection in favour of my ſiſter—why then ſhould it be ſo adverſe to you that I ſhould aſpire to your daughter?"

"His Lordſhip has good reaſons, no doubt, and does not ſtand in my ſituation as a father."

"But, ſurely, Sir, he comes into a nearer ſituation. Allow me, Sir, to hope, that the event of this laſt hour may encourage me to hope for—"

"I muſt," interrupted Mr. Howard,

ard, " entreat you to drop a conver-ſation I freely confeſs gives me un-eaſineſs. I have already expreſſed my ſentiments both to your father and yourſelf, and I now expect to hear no more upon the ſubject."

They had now arrived at the garden-gate—Mr. Howard took his leave;—and preſſing Lord Norbury by the hand as he mounted—" I ſhall not expect you till I ſee you."

CHAP. XXI.

MRS. Somerville could not reſtrain the impulſe of every miſtreſs of a family to treat her gueſt, who now aſſumed a more important, at leaſt more intereſting, character, with ſome extraordinary attentions. The beſt table-cloth, an additional diſh, and a few more ſpoons than uſual decorated the table: the beſt parlour was prepared, and herſelf and her girls were dreſſed for dinner in a manner a little more *comme il faut*. The delay which all this occaſioned, gave time for the gentlemen to dwell a little

a little longer on their mutual affairs, and for My Lord to make an open diſcloſure of his fortune to Mr. Somerville.

Mr. Somerville, who diſdained the vanity of deceit, freely confeſſed that ſuch an union would be an honour he could have had no right to expect; but that the chief thing for his Lordſhip's conſideration would be, the poſſibility of his changing his mind, when he found his wife a very unequal companion for his ſplendour. "But I know very well," added he, "that women have much greater facility in falling in with the manners of the great than men can ever acquire: and I believe that men

can far more eaſily deſcend than they can."

Henry ſighed—" Pardon me," ſaid Lord Norbury; " your daughter has not leſs elegance of manners than I have been ever accuſtomed to ſee; and ſhe has much more real politeneſs, for her civilities are thoſe of nature; thoſe of more poliſhed life are aſſumed, and on that account are diveſted of every intereſting charm, and very often of common politeneſs."

" Your Lordſhip is pleaſed to think more of my girl than ſhe deſerves; but I am inclined not to be behind-hand in your opinion of her."

" Oh, Sir! if you could, how ill would

would you deſerve ſuch a daughter! And if I may hope for the free conſent of yourſelf and Mrs. Somerville, but allow me to ſay chiefly of herſelf, I know of no obſtacle which can or ought to retard my hopes. In the mean time let me truſt you will uſe the lover tenderly, and take his propoſal into your earlieſt conſideration. Have I your permiſſion to talk with your daughter on the ſubject?"

"Moſt willingly," ſaid Mr. Somerville; "I have no heſitation to leave it entirely with your Lordſhip."

The ladies now made their appearance, and the dinner was announced at the ſame time. Fanny

appeared more lovely than ever—her complexion was warmed by her ſenſations—her hair was looſely entwined in a muſlin turband that preſſed a few natural ringlets upon her forehead; and her white dreſs, gathered round the waiſt by a ſaſh of pale yellow Perſian, ſhewed the moſt complete model of nature's excellence that ever ſmiled in female form.

His Lordſhip roſe as they entered, and, with a delight irreſiſtible in man, confuſed her by his admiration: he bent reſpectfully upon her hand, which trembled as he took it to lead her to the other room——

"— wont

" ——— wont ſo oft
In outward things to meditate the charm
Of ſacred order, ſoon ſhe ſeeks at home
To find a kindred order, to exert
Within herſelf this elegance of love,
This fair inſpired delight."

Mr. Somerville was the chief talker during the dinner; for the ſituations and ſentiments of all the other parties were ſo differently occupied, that their minds furniſhed none of thoſe common topics of converſation which are fit to be expreſſed at ſuch a time.

When the table was cleared, the converſation became rather more general; but Fanny had not yet acquired courage ſufficient to bear any part in it with that indifference ne-

ceſſary to purſue any of the ſubjects on which ſhe was ſo well informed.

Mr. Somerville, who wiſely ſuppreſſed a great deal of his uſual ſpeculations, conſidered that ſome repoſe muſt be very acceptable to his gueſt, and therefore propoſed to leave him to himſelf during the afternoon, and, without waiting for his declining it, they all withdrew.

As ſoon as they found themſelves in the garden, the firſt time that they had yet been all collected together, Fanny took her father's arm; and as he ſtooped down his head to kiſs her hand as it came upon his ſleeve, a ſoft tear ſtole down her cheek, the tender ornament of her heart.

"Surely,"

"Surely," ſaid the lovely creature, "this muſt be a fairy dream! Can all this ſtrange affair be true?—Why has my Lord—"

"My deareſt child," returned her father; "aſk thy own merit. Lord Norbury has a heart full of ſenſibility, capable of ſeeing thine; he appears to poſſeſs a ſoul worthy of his rank and fortune, worthy of ſecuring the happineſs of my child."

"But, Sir, you uſed to think me unfit for rank—Well, whatever lot I may be doomed to fill, let me love with ſincerity equal to that which ſeems to join my brother and Harriet Howard."

"How do you like his Lordſhip?"

"Much,"

"Much, very much;—and now—I muſt, I ſuppoſe, ſoon like to love him. I have ſeen ſome marks of juſt honour and merit about him, ſuperior to many men whom you are acquainted with. He is a man who always greatly intereſted me; why, I know not."

"I hope," ſaid her father, "he will now intereſt you more;—he will take ſome early occaſion to aſk you to conſider favourably of his paſſion:—this is the uſual way that lovers take to underſtand one another."

"Did my brother take ſuch a ſtrange circuitous way of learning the ſtate of Harriet's mind?"

"No; for ſhe ſaved him the trouble; but you, who are ſtronger than ſhe, muſt paſs through a more regular ceremony."

"Surely this is a moſt ridiculous plan!—Pray, what am I to ſay? Becauſe if I anſwer the queſtion in the negative, what becomes of the man? And if I ſay yes, it will ſeem ſo odd."

"Nature and your own delicacy will anſwer for you at the time:—theſe ſituations moſt people paſs through, but it is their own fooliſh hypocriſy which renders them ridiculous. If you prepare your mind for what you ſhall ſay, you may rely upon it you will not act with propriety. You will not, perhaps, be

able

able to ſay any thing; ſilence is a mark of unaffected emotion ſo intereſting an occaſion naturally produces."

"But when do you think this is to take place?"

"Perhaps this afternoon."

"Good Heavens! Am I to ſay whether I'll have him, this afternoon? I cannot."

"Then ſay whether you will not have him."

"That might perhaps be more difficult than the other," replied ſhe.

"Then tell him, you'll conſider of it."

Fanny now joined her mother, who

who had been engaged in cloſe debate with her ſon on Armſtrong's ſituation. She had been ſo much alarmed ever ſince his affray at the Park, and knowing his reſolute and courageous ſpirit, that ſhe trembled leſt he ſhould riſk his life in ſome unequal combat: and ſhe extorted from him a ſolemn promiſe, that, as his ſiſter was ſafe, he would ſtifle every ſymptom of revenge for the inſult intended.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

HENRY's ſpirits were clouded in darkneſs.—"I am ſorry, my dear Henry," ſaid his mother, "to find your ſpirits ſo indifferent; — you ſeem full of your own ideas, and abſent to every thing around you.—Why this altered look? You were not uſed to ſhun our general converſation, but added pleaſure to it."

"My concern," anſwered Henry, "ariſes from Mr. Howard's objections, which, I fear, will lead me to ſome artful ſecrecy which I abhor,

or

or to a clandeſtine marriage, which loſes half its joy.—The laſt thing he ſaid to me was to forbid my hopes. Can I be a man and not be caſt down? I ſhall not have further intercourſe—I ſhall be inſulted by menaces for intruſion—I ſhall ſee the woman of my ſoul led off from my embrace to fill the arms of ſome titled ſlave, whoſe honours, though external, are to ſwallow up every ſentiment of affection! With ſuch a fortune as Mr. Howard's, one ſhould have thought he poſſeſſed the ſummit of ambition; and yet he indulges hopes of carrying his daughter to the foot-ſtool of a throne, ſatisfied with nothing leſs than her being

burniſhed in the blaze of majeſty. Knowing how captivating to a woman's heart are birth and circumſtance, can I be leſs than anxious when I ſee that my ſiſter is already on the brink of marriage with a man ſhe almoſt takes on truſt, becauſe of theſe prominent recommendations?"

"If your ſiſter ſhould decide in favour of Lord Norbury, you will recollect how often ſhe has ſeen him both laſt ſummer and this, and that we know his character by our friend Howard.—But you are wrong, Henry, to indulge anxiety ſo early—it is the very poiſon of life—the parent of many ſins and of more miſeries. You are both of you very young, and you ought

ought to aſk yourſelf, in a world like this, where every thing is ſo doubtful, where you may ſucceed in your wiſh and be miſerable, be diſappointed and be bleſt in the diſappointment,—what avails this reſtleſs ſtir and commotion of mind? Let me aſk you, can your ſolicitude change the courſe of things, or unravel the intricacy of human events? You have done, and will I am ſure do, all that is incumbent upon you in your ſituation, and which you owe to the lady; and having done this, wiſdom commands you to ſtop, and to poſſeſs your mind in peace. By ruſhing beyond this point, and by devoting yourſelf to an immoderate and fruitleſs

fruitleſs concern about the event at preſent unknown, you loſe ground inſenſibly; becauſe, inſtead of advancing, you retard your ſucceſs; and you plant a thorn in your breaſt that requires very little cultivation to gall you for the reſt of your life. Suſtain with dignity the weight of your condition, nor meanly acquieſce in grievances within your power to redreſs. Call up the manly energy of ſoul with which you are endowed; look on the ſmiles of active virtue and beneficence, and,

"Spurning the yoke of theſe inglorious days,
"Mix in their deeds, and kindle with their flame."

Henry was ſtruck with this mode of

of reaſoning, and began to revive from his diſtreſs; but his mind, though it wanted relief, could not avoid reſting upon the blank which Mr. Howard had caſt upon it.

"My dear Henry," ſaid his father, "the diſappointments we meet with are not always to be reſiſted—force will not avail againſt poſitive facts. The energy I recommend you to exert is over your own mind, to ſave it from deſpair;—you will learn by adverſity how to value what you enjoy, and not to conceive every bleſſing ſwallowed up in the one diſappointment you meet with. There are inſtances where men have loſt kingdoms with more fortitude than you

are

are now ſhewing yourſelf maſter of. I will allow that this is an affliction of a ſecondary kind: but a tolerable ſhare of fortitude is requiſite to bear it. But it is within the power of our nature.—Let me give you an example of what I mean, in the ſtory of Vetranio, mentioned by Gibbon."

They ſat down together in the arbour. Mrs. Somerville and her daughters joined them.

"In the conſpiracy of Magnentius and old Vetranio againſt Conſtantius, affairs were at laſt reduced to a meeting of Conſtantius and Vetranio, on a wide plain near Conſtantinople, where the united armies were aſſembled. Conſtantius delivered an eloquent

an eloquent harangue to the armies; and the officers who ſurrounded the tribunal, and were inſtructed to act their parts in this extraordinary ſcene, confeſſed the irreſiſtible power of reaſon and eloquence, by ſaluting the Emperor Conſtantius as their lawful ſovereign. The contagion of loyalty and repentance was communicated from rank to rank, till the plain of Sardica reſounded with the univerſal acclamation of 'Away with theſe upſtart uſurpers! Long life and victory to the ſon of Conſtantine! Under his banners alone we will fight and conquer!'

"The ſhouts of thouſands, their menacing geſtures, the fierce claſh-

ing of their arms, aſtoniſhed and ſubdued the courage of Vetranio, who ſtood, amid the defection of his followers, in anxious and ſilent ſuſpenſe. Inſtead of embracing the laſt refuge of deſpair, he ſubmitted to his fate; and taking the diadem from his head, in the view of both armies, fell proſtrate at the feet of his conqueror.

"Conſtantius uſed his victory with prudence and moderation; and raiſing from the ground the aged ſuppliant, whom he affected to ſtyle by the endearing name of father, he gave him his hand to deſcend from the throne. The city of Pruſa was aſſigned for the exile or retirement

of

of the abdicated monarch, who lived ſix years in the enjoyment of eaſe and affluence. He often expreſſed his grateful ſenſe of the goodneſs of Conſtantius, and, with a very amiable ſimplicity, adviſed his benefactor to reſign the ſceptre of the world, and to ſeek for content, where alone it could be found, in the peaceful obſcurity of a private condition."

"Would you," ſaid Mr. Somerville, "have applauded Vetranio more if he had ruſhed upon his ſword in the preſence of his armies? Or would he have deſerved the praiſe of poſterity if he wreaked his vexation in the blood of Conſtantius? On the other hand, he ſhews before

thouſands of witneſſes whoſe eyes were upon him, that he had courage to reſign to their unconquerable power, inſtead of plunging them in blood; and that by liſtening to their voice, and the voice of reaſon, he could ſpend the reſt of his days in virtuous eaſe, without envying or repining at the ſucceſs of his rival.

"Come then, Henry, no longer let your brow be clouded thus—we require your advice, and look to you to participate in your ſiſter's affairs as well as your own; it is ſelfiſh to deal only with yourſelf." And calling to his daughter Mary, he bad her come and repeat the verſes ſhe had learned laſt week about cheerfulneſs.

"I don't

"I don't think I can find the copy, Papa."—"How ſo?" ſaid Fanny; "I gave it you this morning."—

"No, indeed, my Lady!"—curtſeying and putting on a grave face at her ſiſter.

"You ſaucy thing!" ſaid her mother. The paper was produced, and little Mary read the following lines:—

"COME, Cheerfulneſs, triumphant Fair,
Shine through the painful cloud of care;
Oh ſweet of language, mild of mien,
Oh virtue's friend, and pleaſure's queen!
Fair guardian of domeſtic life,
Bleſt baniſher of home-bred ſtrife!
Nor ſullen lip, nor taunting eye,
Deforms the ſcene where thou art by:

No ſick'ning huſband damns the hour
That bound his joys to female power
No pining mother weeps the cares
That parents waſte on hopeleſs heirs :
Th' officious daughters pleas'd attend ;
The brother riſes to the friend :
By thee our board with flowers is crown'd,
By thee with ſongs our walks reſound ;
By thee the ſprightly mornings ſhine,
And ev'ning hours in peace decline !"

J. Buncle.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

"I PROTEST," ſaid Mrs. Somerville, "here comes Lord Norbury down the green walk!" They were in uniſon to receive him; but Fanny was ſo much agitated as to deſire they would not leave her. Indeed there was little cauſe for the precaution; for after ſitting with them a ſhort time, playing with the little girl, and being rather ſparing of his attentions to Fanny, he roſe from his ſeat, and expreſſed a wiſh to talk apart with Mr. Somerville and his ſon.

As they walked together, his Lordſhip obſerved, that, after the kind permiſſion he had received to open his mind more at large to Fanny, it might ſeem ſtrange that he ſhould not avail himſelf of the firſt opportunity; but that, ſince they had left him, he had received an abuſive letter from Armſtrong, demanding ſatisfaction; and that being well enough to hold a piſtol he had urged him to come to him on the following day, and fight him in his room—and that his miſery and vexation, till he had ſatiated his vengeance, gave him no hopes of recovery.

" And thus the fool hopes to recover,

cover, by adding blood to wickedneſs!" ſaid Mr. Somerville. "I have anſwered his letter," continued Lord Norbury—"that I could not ſtoop to fight any man upon ſuch unequal terms, and therefore that as ſoon as he ſhould be more recovered, he knew where to find me, and that then I ſhould be ready to meet him. If I may hope, Sir, for the affection of your daughter, I would not too deeply engage it in a cloud of anxiety, or diſturb the charming harmony in which you live, by aſking for her hand until an affair of ſuch a nature as this is concluded. I am thus unfortunately bound to tear myſelf from you, and I muſt leave

your daughter to the guardianſhip of that protection which I hope will watch over her merit, and preſerve her from every woe!"

He burſt into a flood of tears—Henry could not bridle his ungoverned rage.—"Is your Lordſhip then determined to ſtake your life againſt that of a ruffian you have once overcome?—Is it an honour incumbent on your Lordſhip, to exclude yourſelf from happineſs in order to yield to the threats of a cowardly bravo? Will you condeſcend to gain a victory over a ſcoundrel whoſe name diſgraces your lips?"

"My very excellent friend," ſaid

Lord Norbury; "we muſt by the laws of honour and the cuſtoms of our country ſubmit to affairs of this kind, though we know them to be wrong: and much as I eſteem you for your noble indignation, the prejudices of the world will value my reputation for courage, and for fidelity to your ſiſter, by my conduct in her defence."

"It cannot be, my Lord! it muſt not be!—Let me go to him and ſhew him the fallacy of ſuch a meaſure!"

"It would be reaſoning with a madman, and diſgracing me!" interrupted his Lordſhip.

"By all that's ſacred," cried Henry, "it ſhall not be!—If I am

to believe Mr. Howard that I never can expect his daughter, what an uſeleſs being am I! Recall your letter, and tell him, I am injured by him moſt (and he has injured me moſt) in his inſult upon my ſiſter; that before he pays the debt of gallantry to you, he ſhall anſwer that of duty to her brother!" Leaving no time for reply, he ruſhed to the ſtable-yard, which joined the garden, and called loudly to the boy to ſaddle his horſe.

"If it ſhould pleaſe Heaven to take the raſcal, by this hand"—ſaid Henry, looking back with eyes flaming with indignation.

"You muſt fly your country, or

ſurrender

ſurrender to its juſtice," interrupted his father, who had followed him— "and if you fall!" — claſping his hands together—

"I then, Sir, ſhould leave my family in the boſoms of yourſelf and Lord Norbury;—and Harriet with her father planning high ſchemes for her happineſs!"

He ſprang ſuddenly from them; and, leaping the garden-wall, mounted his horſe and was out of ſight in a moment.

Mr. Somerville and his Lordſhip ran after him, both calling upon him to return, and leaving the ladies in a conſternation not to be deſcribed.

The diſtance was at leaſt three miles

miles to the inn where Armſtrong was confined;—they ordered their horſes, to overtake Henry, and hurried on with all haſte. There was a conſiderable hill upon the road, and as they went along they diſcovered him upon the ſummit by his grey horſe, making all the ſpeed in his power; ſo that they deſpaired of preventing the interview they had ſo much cauſe to dread.

"This is headſtrong indeed!" ſaid Mr. Somerville: "perhaps before we arrive ſomething fatal may have happened, and on either ſide it is miſery in the extreme!" They purſued their way in the utmoſt agitation of mind. When they arrived, they

they were greatly relieved by ſeeing Henry in earneſt parley with the landlord, who ſeemed to be oppoſing him; but upon Mr. Somerville's coming up, he acquainted him that he had received ſtrict orders from the ſurgeon to ſuffer no perſon to go to Mr. Armſtrong's room till his return; for that the agitation of his mind and his reſtleſſneſs at his confinement, which had deranged and diſappointed ſome important buſineſs he had to tranſact elſewhere, added to the hurry of ſpirits excited by the letter he had written to Lord Norbury, had contributed to accelerate his fever; and being a large athletic man, it was eſſential to his recovery

recovery that he ſhould try to get ſome reſt, or the accident might prove fatal to him.

Foiled in this part of his reſolution, Henry felt his paſſions and his views at a ſtand; but he was ſtill deaf to every argument, and was with the greateſt difficulty prevented from the deſperate reſolution of waiting till Armſtrong ſhould be ready to receive him. His father peremptorily inſiſted upon his immediate return with him, and Lord Norbury purſued his way, overcome with fatigue, to the Park.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

"I SHOULD have thought, Henry," ſaid Mr. Somerville, as they rode gently home, "that you had formed principles ſtrong enough to oppoſe the folly of expecting ſatisfaction for an injury, by ruining your own and your friends' happineſs, in attempting the life of a wretch unworthy to be your competitor. What would you have gained if you had deſtroyed him? or, if you yourſelf were to have ruſhed into eternity on ſuch an errand as the ſeeking revenge upon another's life, what

what would you have gained after you had made all thoſe unhappy whom you are thus falſely pretending to ſerve? The greateſt courage is cool and ſedate; it ſpares itſelf where it ought, and expoſes itſelf only where occaſion makes it neceſſary: but you have been ruſhing headlong into the enormity of haſty violence, and have been ſaved from the indelible infamy of the offence you were blundering into, by the reſolution of the landlord."

"Sir," replied Henry, "nothing but ſuch an occaſion as this, and the ſituation of all the parties, could have juſtified a duel: I have no ſecret revenge againſt Armſtrong, unleſs to

puniſh

puniſh infamy can be called ſo; and if ſo, juſtice muſt be branded with that name. I have never ſeen him but once or twice, and then never ſpoke to him; but a warm ſenſe of his guilt, of the ſhameleſs inſult offered to us all, and the high value I ſet upon my ſiſter's happineſs, which ſhall not be interrupted by the arm of ſo baſe an aſſaſſin; her character in the world, and her own delicacy, all ſeem to awaken thoſe calls of energy which a woman cannot exert herſelf, and which ſhe muſt therefore rely upon her friends for, as eſſential to her cauſe."

"Did you ever know then, that a woman's delicacy or character was

improved

improved by this ordeal of blood; or was ſhe ever made happier by it? If ſhe has any regard for the perſon who riſks his life for her, her miſery is ſealed from the inſtant of the challenge—if ſhe has no regard for him, I hope you'll agree with me that duelling is a very ſilly piece of buſineſs."

"How then," reſumed Henry, "will My Lord diveſt himſelf of it? If I have ruſhed thus haſtily into it, he has ſought it deliberately; and when it is known that he nouriſhes the expectation of it from Armſtrong's recovery, and that his ſilence to my ſiſter, after all that has paſſed this morning, is explained in this man-

ner,

ner, will he find more juſtification? Or perhaps lords have, among their numerous other privileges, this additional one of hazarding their own brains when they pleaſe."

"Lord Norbury is maſter of his own actions," ſaid Mr. Somerville; "I cannot controul them, but it is my duty to urge to you every argument againſt ſuch raſhneſs. Beſides, you have here two antagoniſts to chaſtiſe—the plotter as well as the executer. Why don't you find out Sir Francis Bloom, and charge him at the ſame ſport?"

"He is too contemptible for the notice of any one who has the feelings of a man," returned Henry indignantly—

nantly—"Armſtrong has been a more prominent raſcal: he has executed one plot here; but I learn that he is the plotter and the villain everywhere—Surely to puniſh ſuch a man is doing God ſervice."

"No, Henry! God requires no ſervice of this ſort;—he will mark by the finger of his own ineffable juſtice, every one who does evil—he does not delegate to mortals, all in ſome degree guilty, his power of either cenſure or puniſhment. Forbid it Heaven, that, when you kneel in his awful preſence, you ſhould feel the frown of his unchanged decrees for having preſumed to violate the ſacred order of his laws! Imagine your-

yourſelf for a moment aſking for that mercy which you refuſed to another; can you, while refuſing to be entreated and diſdaining to forgive, conceive an inſtance of more unnatural and extravagant arrogance? Even among men, the groſs indecency of intemperate anger or cool revenge renders the perſon the ſcorn and the ſcoff of every one who knows him."

"But, Sir," ſaid Henry, "though this may be all juſt, let me aſk you if there is or can be a greater mortification in life than for any of us, and for a young innocent and virtuous woman to ſuffer in her reputation, to have her fair fame blaſted by the breath of infamy, and for it to

aſſume

aſſume the air of probability and walk abroad unpuniſhed? Who can ſuffer a wounded ſpirit?"

"Thou haſt a noble generous ſoul, my Henry!" ſaid his father; "but you have yet to learn that to reſtrain its energy is an intereſt as well as a duty to be cultivated. It is the ſecret of happineſs to make it as independent as poſſible: our afflictions become intolerable, becauſe we ourſelves ſharpen their ſting and warm their poiſon: the feuds and animoſities between families and neighbours, which diſturb the intercourſe of human life, and collectively compoſe half the miſery of it, have their foundation in the want of a forgiving

temper, and can never ceaſe but by the exerciſe of this virtue on one ſide or on both."

"But, ſir, I am not wanting, I hope, in this diſpoſition—I acknowledge that I feel reſentment for the wrong done to us; but I think alſo, that there is a benefit to ſociety in making men repent of their crimes, that they may reſtrain them."

"This is the office of the magiſtrate alone," ſaid his father.—"If you uſurp his authority, you rouſe the lion upon yourſelf—and thus find two enemies.—Would you deſire that a ſerpent ſhould ſting you twice?"

"Am I then to ſubmit to every

affront? to receive injuries, and be afraid to puniſh them—to yield to the ſcorn of general contempt?"

"No, Henry, no! Will not your courage be more nobly tried, by ſhewing to all the world that you diſdain the folly of cuſtom, and reject the falſe meteor of glory which dazzles in a duel, but fades inſtantly into miſery and contempt?—Is your whole life and your happineſs to be plunged into the darkeſt abyſs of deſpair, becauſe you have received one inſult? Is it generous to charge your reputation with a ſin, by attempting to preſerve it crimſoned with blood? Is it an act of contemptible

temptible fear, you ſeem ſo much to dread, to ſhun baſe aſſaſſination? True courage is to reſiſt evil, not to plunge deeper into it.

CHAP. XXIV.

IT was quite evening when they arrived at home. The anxiety of Mrs. Somerville and the young ladies was in ſome meaſure relieved by their return—though the ſuſpenſe in which they had remained ſo long, had interrupted their uſual occupations, which were accuſtomed to render their time rapid in its flight.

Mr. Somerville's ſyſtem diſdained a ſmooth repreſentation of unfavorable facts—he held it childiſh, and next to ſinful, thus to deſtroy the natural ſtrength of the mind, by diſguiſing

guiſing truth, and rendering it unable to bear her language: he therefore related in plain terms the ſimple narrative of the events of the paſt few hours.—

Fanny felt what nature would dictate to every woman to feel in her ſituation—more anxiety for her brother whom ſhe loved, than for her lover whom ſhe only eſteemed:—— but the more remote conſiderations of the probability of her never ſeeing him again, of never anſwering to the name of Lady Norbury, and of being born perhaps to bluſh unſeen, were ſufficient to take their ſecondary place in her breaſt, to ſecure a ſigh to the departing ſpirit of

her gloſing fortunes, and to diſturb thoſe gentle ſlumbers which had been accuſtomed to preſs her nightly pillow! As her fond imagination increaſed her difficulties, it gained new force of attachment—To be deprived from hearing the vows of a man who proved his love by riſking his life in her protection, and again in avenging her wrongs—to be commanded to wait his fate who had no other inducement for his affection but herſelf—and to ſtrive to chaſe from her mind the expectation and hope of binding ſuch a man to her heart!—his name, his character, his polite attentions, and her parents' recommendation of him—all combined to awaken

awaken every tender emotion in her breaſt, and to call up the dignified exaltation of impreſſive love, which perhaps the ſmooth current of an uninterrupted offer would never have excited.

Oh human nature, how doſt thou work by contraries!—how do the gentle fibres of thy ſyſtem draw inſenſibly to a centre all the extremities of thy paſſions; and, as the ſenſitive plant, cloſe at the touch of tenderneſs, preſſing within thy boſom the delights of life!—

On the following day, Mr. Somerville and his ſon ſet off to attend the funeral of the man to whom, notwithſtanding his ſelfiſh injuſtice, they

determined to pay their laſt tribute of reſpect. They had appointed Mr. Gregſon, their attorney, to meet them, on whoſe fidelity and uprightneſs they had always placed a well-deſerved reliance.

Mr. Gregſon had been long acquainted with the family—he had received a liberal education, and had formed ideas in general ſuperior to the low mechanical part of his profeſſion, where drudgery and rapid chicane go hand in hand, to oppreſs the weak, to ſtarve the hungry, and to expoſe the houſeleſs child of want! He had ſeen enough of the miſeries of mankind to rejoice in relieving them—he had felt the ſorrows of

weeping

weeping indigence; and had often diſarmed half its terrors by acting the mediator inſtead of the executor of revenge.—Could all his profeſſion be reduced to ſuch as moved on his level, the popular prejudice would be forgotten, and the ſervants of diſtributive juſtice would be dignified with the ſhield of protection, inſtead of the faſces of execution!

Such was the man, in whoſe ſkill and uprightneſs Henry was about to repoſe the whole conduct of his affairs.—

The funeral was ſumptuous, but its pomp excited no tears—Even old Ralph had been forgotten, and in his turn he forgot to weep—"For one

good turn deſerves another," ſaid the old man.——He had been accuſtomed to buffet the elements, and beat about in the fortuitous gales of fortune, and he expected nothing elſe for the reſt of his days:—but it happened about this time that the gate-porter at the park was ill—he ſoon after died; and Mr. Howard did not ſuffer old Ralph to live long upon the ſcanty earnings of his laſt place: he reſided for the reſt of his days in the Park lodge; and, when he died, there was not an old goſſip within three miles of the church-ſtile that did not drop a tear, and repeat theſe words printed over his grave; "Poor Ralph is ſilent for evermore!"

Mr.

Mr. Gregſon found, on peruſal of all the writings he could diſcover, that the charges upon the eſtate would leave a reſidue of nearly one thouſand pounds. Henry therefore determined to ſell the manor and manſion-houſe, and to retain a ſmall farm contiguous to his father's; which, with a trifling balance in money after payment of the incidental expences, would enable him to fill up all his time in cultivation, reſolving to adhere to his firſt deſign of caſting the produce into the common ſtock. He rejoiced in this acquiſition, which would render him complete maſter of a farm, and yet preſerve him in the habits of ſocial in-

tercourſe with his amiable and beloved family: and he conſidered, that if ever ſuch extraordinary fortune ſhould happen, as the marriage of his ſiſter to Lord Norbury, and of himſelf to Harriet Howard, he might thus be enabled to make a ſmall proviſion for his ſiſter Mary, the growing delight of every eye—the darling of almoſt every heart!

Two days having been nearly occupied in forming all theſe arrangements, Mr. Gregſon was left in full poſſeſſion of the premiſes, with authority to conduct the ſale, and to take ſuch meaſures as ſhould, without the law's delay, put every one in poſſeſſion of his own.

Mr.

Mr. Somerville and his ſon returned to their expecting family, whoſe unaffected excellence never ſhone ſo conſpicuouſly as at their meeting after an abſence however ſhort. The charming ſmile that welcomes a quick approach, the haſtening ſtep that treads ſwiftly over domeſtic ground, or the intereſting covetouſneſs of every word rapidly related, that glorify the firſt meeting of a family devoted to each other, is, to ſay the leaſt of it, a ſhadow of heaven!

All the ſubjects of their preſent attention were full of intereſting importance.—The death and funeral

of

of old Mr. Somerville, the gloom which hung ſtill upon Henry's brow, and the ſituation of Lord Norbury had all their weight: but Henry claimed their principal regard. The anxious earneſtneſs of his mother's countenance expreſſed a deſire to penetrate into his intention too keenly to need her queſtioning him upon it:—he, whoſe ſoul was made up of domeſtic love, delayed not to give her the moſt ſolemn aſſurances that he was convinced of the folly and raſhneſs of duelling, and that he would not, unleſs it ſhould be neceſſary to ſtand between Lord Norbury and Armſtrong, hazard

his life in ſuch hands:—this was the utmoſt he could be perſuaded to promiſe, it was the utmoſt he could perſuade himſelf to undertake.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

WHEN Lord Norbury, to whom it is neceſſary for us to return, arrived at the Park, Mr. Howard was engaged with company, and therefore was not made acquainted with the incident already mentioned, until the following day. In the mean time a ſervant, who had been upon the road, and ſtopped for refreſhment at the inn where Armſtrong was confined, ſeeing the haſty approach of Henry, followed by his father and Lord Norbury, had thought it moſt prudent to purſue

his

his way, and arrived in the kitchen time enough to relate the whole adventure, with a multitude of aggravations, before Miſs Howard's woman was called to dreſs her young lady; —who, lending a willing ear to all that came from that corner of the globe, was tortured with the ſuſpenſe of ſending the woman no leſs than three times to Joe, to learn whether Mr. Armſtrong had loſt an arm or a head—whether Lord Norbury had killed him or Fanny—and whether young Mr. Somerville, or his father, or his lordſhip, or Armſtrong, or the landlord, or all the people in the farm-yard, had not, or which of them had actually died and come to

life

life again : and after all, poor Harriet was utterly unable to gueſs what it was that had befallen the whole party.—

The incoherency of the ſtory was the only ſource of conſolation ſhe could collect ; for it ſhewed her the folly of encouraging anxiety, when ſhe could not explain the cauſe of it, even to her own imagination ; and yet ſomething like abſence and an earneſt ſolicitude frequently ſent her mind upon the wings of buſy thought far away from the circle ſhe was engaged in, till Lord Norbury made his appearance. She could then aſſure herſelf, that at leaſt one worthy friend was ſafe ; but then " he might have

remained

remained alone to tell the tale!" What cruel deſtiny enchains a female heart, that, by the ſhackles of cultivated life, ſhe ſhould be reprehenſible if, under Harriet's ſituation, ſhe ſhould have ventured to aſk ſome news of her deareſt friend!—The fatigue his lordſhip had undergone ſince he laſt left the Park, and the ſtock of anxiety he had lately added to it, rendered his brow heavy and depreſſed, contrary to his uſual agreeable manners: he entered the room and paid his reſpects to every one preſent, without that cordial pleaſantneſs which had always ſecured him the general favor;—he bowed reſpectfully to Mrs. Howard, and,

after

after making a ſlight obeiſance to the circle, ſat down by his friend, with whom he fell into converſation for ſome time.—Mrs. Howard, who, whatever might be her opinion of the match with Henry, felt as a woman, and knew her daughter's wiſh, therefore aſked his lordſhip if he had left all his friends well; which he anſwered in the affirmative. The cards and the converſation then became general, and in the vortex of the ceremony he withdrew unobſerved to his chamber.

The uſual civility of a viſit to a family upon the deceaſe of any relation, became a ſerious point with Mr. Howard, who, though he ſtrongly

objected

objected to the union of his daughter with Henry, yet had that high eſteem for his friend, which he was very unwilling to divert into any other channel; he looked round among all his acquaintance, and could find none who was worthy to take the place Mr. Somerville held in his eſteem. If Harriet ſhould be of the party, it would look like acquieſcence—if ſhe ſtaid at home, he had little doubt but Henry would be found in the evening behind ſome alcove again. He reſolved to truſt to chance, and as he ſhould himſelf be with them, he thought he could keep a ready eye upon their proceedings.

Under theſe impreſſions, the coach

was

was ordered for the ladies, and Lord Norbury drove Mr. Howard in his phaeton, on the following day.

Some of the common people, and perhaps ſome of their own ſervants not very hoſtile to the wiſh, forgetting that forms and ceremonies in ſuch caſes would have drawn the gentleman the other way, and that the ladies would have waited at home for him, ſpread the report that the wedding was to be at Mr. Somerville's pariſh-church, and actually wiſhed them joy as they paſſed along —and the pariſh clerk, out of his overflowing zeal for the propagation of ſuch glad tidings, ſet the old bells in the ſteeple a-ringing, and

fixed

ſixed up a green bow at the weather-cock, to ſhew to all diſtant travellers what ſport was going forward.

When they arrived at the green gate, the whole family went out to meet them. Conceive the joy!—Reader, do you poſſeſs the ſoul of human love?—Have you the glow of ſympathy thrilling through thy tendereſt vein? Have you ever known the charm of conſcious, duteous, unabating affection, guſhing at every pore, ſwelling at every reſpiration, trembling on each lip?——Conceive, if you have not loſt it in unchaſte deſire, if you have not burſt the charm of innocence by diſdaining the bond of untainted fidelity, if you have not

not ſuffered the ebullitions of honeſt nature to be waſted by the blaſting mildew of pollution—conceive the joy that beat high in Henry's boſom, once again to preſs his Harriet's hand, and almoſt again, as he handed her from the carriage, to claſp her to his heart!—The mid-day ſun never diffuſed a warmer glow over all the expanſe of animated nature, than Henry's noble countenance expreſſed.

Soon after they had been aſſembled, Fanny, who longed to hear whether ſhe had been made the ſubject of converſation at the Park, and Harriet, who was equally deſirous of knowing the events of the paſt week

with more certainty than ſhe had yet learned them, propoſed to each other in the ſame moment a walk in the orchard.

"If we ever loved one another," ſaid Harriet, "it ſeems, my dear Fanny, as if we now have more cauſe for our friendſhip than ever; and yet our affairs are far from being ſimilar—for in yours nothing offers to prevent——"

"Indeed!" interrupted Fanny—"Is the duel given up then?"

"Good Heavens—Duel! what duel? who is going to fight a duel?—Pray tell me what you mean—is not every thing ſettled?"

"I don't know," ſaid Fanny; "but

I am given to underſtand that My Lord is to fight a duel with Armſtrong; and therefore I am ſo far from the ſituation you imagine, that I muſt not indulge any hopes that it may ever take place."

Harriet was as much relieved, as a fiſh which eſcapes by the fracture of a net; adding as ſhe gained breath, that if that was all her anxiety, Fanny might reſt in very good ſecurity, and might begin to order her clothes—"For," added ſhe, "I know it is all ſettled, and you are to live in Portman-ſquare, and in Suffolk—and your ſedan is to be lined with white ſatin, and your favours are to be edged with white ſilver lace, and the men are to wear

wear large gold epaulettes, and your Ladyſhip is to be every thing in town, till another wedding happens, and carries the tide that way. And ſo perhaps this duel you talk of, is not to be after all—"

"Heaven ſend it may not!" ſaid Fanny; "for it involves us all in a world of anxiety: for my brother declares it ſhall not be, till that Armſtrong has given him ſatisfaction—and we all thought they were going to fight two days ago; but he has been prevailed upon by my father to aſſure us, that he will not interfere unleſs it ſhould be neceſſary."

"And pray," ſaid Harriet with

great earneſtneſs, "what is the neceſſity which will call him out?"

"I do not know," anſwered Fanny, "but that of preventing any misfortune to Lord Norbury, and of ſaving anxiety to ——"

"To your Ladyſhip, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Harriet quickly, attempting to put on a rallying air. "I ſhould have imagined he would have thought alſo that there were others who ought to be conſulted on ſuch a ſtep."

"Ah, my dear Harriet!" ſaid Fanny, "there lies the chief cauſe of his violence!—He ſays, that your father has given him a poſitive refuſal, and that therefore ——"

"No,

"No, Fanny! therefore he has not a right to throw himſelf away! To you I will not heſitate to ſay how much Henry is truly mine—I have heard nothing of this poſitive refuſal—if it were ſo, I ſhould ſcarcely have been brought here to-day. No, no!—tell him from me, that, whatever commands I am bound at preſent to obey, there may come a time when I will ſhew him how unalterably——— But they are all coming into the garden—Let us all tenderly love one another, and we ſhall be happy; and Lady Norbury ſhall become the protectreſs and confidante of her friend."

CHAP. XXVI.

THE converſation in the parlour had been far leſs intereſting—Mr. Howard preſerved the cool damp of politeneſs, which ſhuts up communication. The ladies had paſſed a few words acroſs the table, and Mr. Howard purpoſely occupied the time in an endeavour to divert their minds from more tender ſubjects, by ſpeaking on the topics of public converſation, which were then directed to the death of the celebrated Captain Cook; not becauſe it had juſt happened, but becauſe ſome prints and a the-

a theatrical repreſentation had revived the ſubject in the public mind: and he ſtrove to engage Henry's attention, in order to keep him in the room.

"It is very queſtionable," ſaid Mr. Somerville, "whether voyages of diſcovery have ever been in the main really uſeful, if you conſider the ends they have all produced."

"They have always been accounted honourable," ſaid Lord Norbury, "and calculated for the noble purpoſe of enlightening the minds of ignorant nations—diffuſing chriſtianity, and rendering mankind therefore more happy."

"But, if theſe effects had follow-

ed," ſaid Mr. Somerville, " I would not have joined in applauding voyages of diſcovery.——What tribes among mankind, either eaſt or weſt, have we rendered happy by viſiting them? It appears to me, that we have diſturbed their tranquillity, deluged their ſhades with blood, ſet up ruin and horror in the place of peace, and with the name of religion burned their altars, and diſgraced our own by intolerant perſecution: India, America, Africa, iſlands, deſerts, all have felt the contagion of European injuſtice, wherever Europe has extended her flag! I pitied the fate of Captain Cook as ſincerely as any man: but had I been a native of

Owyhee,

Owyhee, I ſhould have aſſiſted in his death. Had not the vices of Europe corrupted Otaheitean blood? You will find ſome hints of this in Mr. Dunbar's Eſſays, who ſays, that while ſo heavy a charge againſt either France or England is retorted on each other by thoſe nations, the natives of the happy Iſland will have cauſe to lament that any European veſſel ever touched upon their ſhores."

"Then the original deſign," ſaid Henry, "has been fruſtrated?"

"Not entirely ſo," ſaid Mr. Howard. "We have brought home ſome curious ſpecimens of their manners, cuſtoms, clothing, and inſtruments

of war; and planted our Engliſh flag upon their ſettlements."

"It is true," ſaid Mr. Somerville. "And to what benefit to either party —excluſive of the practice of navigation? Is there any eſtabliſhed trade carried on between both countries, and to what advantage?"

In ſome of the iſlands we have eſtabliſhed good factories, which carry on extenſive trade, and produce great influx of property and revenue at home—And when you fail that way, you find a place of refuge."

"What I have advanced," ſaid Mr. Somerville, "is upon a general view of the whole ſubject, not on a partial

tial one of certain diſtricts. Our enterpriſes have moſtly failed for want of forming a good underſtanding and concurrence with the other nations: if nations would eſtabliſh a concert and union among themſelves, all regions of the earth might become habitable, and the elements themſelves almoſt ceaſe to rebel."

"Theſe are good ſpeculations," replied Mr. Howard: "but you muſt make a ſyſtem for men, not men for a ſyſtem: your language and philoſophy will do well for the millennium which is approaching, when our ſwords will be turned into pruning-hooks."

"And this," reſumed Mr. Somer-

ville, "would be happy for us, would it not? Why ſhould we not learn to wage war with the elements inſtead of our own kind; and exert all our united proweſs in the recovery of our patrimony from chaos, inſtead of adding to its empire?"

"But until that time arrives," ſaid Mr. Howard, "the good of our country claims the firſt care and advancement."

"There can be no juſtice," replied Somerville, "in that ſyſtem which deſigns a particular good to any part, and does not conſiſt fairly with the good of the whole in itſelf. In order to render any partial good really and truly juſt, you muſt ſhew

the

the certainty of its not producing an equal portion of evil—and that muſt not be a mere matter of ſpeculation, but of poſitive proof."

The ladies here interrupted the continuance of theſe enquiries, by propoſing a walk in the garden, which the reſt of the party were not ſorry to join. Our worthy philoſopher was generally very ſtrong in his conceptions, but often bordered upon the dogmatical; and though, for a country gentleman, he had acquired an extraordinary ſtock of very practical knowledge of the world—he often plunged too deeply into philoſophical refinement, which rendered

ſome

ſome of his opinions rather more ingenious than uſeful.

Henry had reliſhed this converſation, for obvious reaſons, much leſs than the reſt, and, finding no opportunity of leaving the party, marked by the general abſence of his manner and countenance, that he momentarily ſuffered the penance of a priſoner who had a near view of the charms of freedom: it was not unobſerved by Mr. Howard, who, although he ſtrove to prolong the converſation, was not too old to have forgotten that ſuch a penance deſerved a reaſonable compaſſion.

As ſoon as they had joined in the garden,

garden, they were ſurpriſed by a letter, which was brought to Lord Norbury, in the hand-writing of Sir Francis Bloom——it appeared to have been written in agitation and in extremes.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"My laſt moments are greatly diſturbed—my mind is an uninterrupted agony!—If I ever loved you, think how much I now feel to have wronged you!—But I thank God, you prevented the effects of the plot.—Do not ſpeak of me to the Somervilles, it will give me pain to know that they add their curſes to yours——a few days, moſt probably a few hours, will ſhorten the pain

pain to which I am doomed in this world—Heaven knows I pay dear for all the pleaſures I have found in it—Perhaps this may ſoften what I have yet to expect in the next—While you are reading this, which I have made great effort to write, I ſhall ſink into hopeleſs night.—May you be happy!——

Your loſt

FRANCIS BLOOM."

King's-Bench.

P. S. For God's ſake do not fight with Armſtrong!"

The poſtſcript was written with eager haſte, and much worſe than the

letter; and a rent of the paper near the wafer evidently ſhewed that the advice it contained had been forgotten before he had ſealed it. Two days had elapſed ſince they had heard any thing of Armſtrong; their curioſity was fairly excited; and yet they heſitated to enquire, leſt they ſhould appear anxious for his deſtruction. Lord Norbury's manners and attentions to Fanny, not a little aided by Harriet's continually pleading in his cauſe, rendered his moments more precious in the country: but his duty, or rather what he conceived to be his duty, obliged him to add another excuſe for his abſence or ſilence, and to give him the unfortunate

fortunate but untrue appearance of indifference towards her. Their ſituation was peculiar—they knew each other's ſentiments, though they had never heard them—they ſaw their union approach, without perſonal explanation; and they were actually building up a certain dependence on each other for mutual happineſs, without the moſt diſtant avowal to each other of their deſign to promote it.—Women are not in general content with a man who does not ſpeak for himſelf—and men are ſeldom reſtrained by claſhing circumſtances from ſecuring the heart they are aiming to poſſeſs, after all obſtacles are ſurmounted. But the ſincere delicacy

licacy of Lord Norbury's mind—a conſciouſneſs that very probably his rank might add ſomething in the preponderating ſcale, and the eminent admiration he daily nouriſhed in his heart for Fanny's extraordinary beauty and native unaffected elegance, reſtrained him from attempting her hand, until his own were free from contraſted obligations.

He took Henry aſide; and, as he ſhewed him the letter, Henry marked with ſuſpicious indignation the ſubſtance of the poſtſcript.—

" There is black villainy in this—and ſhall be ſifted to its rotten core. —Your Lordſhip will allow me to inſiſt that you will not riſk yourſelf with

with either of theſe raſcals—Perhaps the feeble hands of Sir Francis may have given ſtrength to Armſtrong's wickedneſs—Let us diſbelieve this letter, till we ſee further."

"Bloom can gain nothing by any deſign upon me," ſaid Lord Norbury.

"True," replied Henry, "but he is the tool of that envious Armſtrong."

Lord Norbury, who knew more of the Baronet than Henry could be ſuppoſed to do, and remembered ſome traits of a generous diſpoſition, reſiſted this advice, and determined to go to town, with aſſurances that

he

he would take ſuch precautions as ſhould ſecure him from injury in a viſit to the priſon—and in the mean time commiſſioned Henry to avoid ſeeing Armſtrong, but to learn his ſituation.

Affairs being thus arranged between them, they rejoined the party, who were then preparing to ſeparate. —Lord Norbury acquainted them generally, that ſome particular affairs called him immediately to town, and that he hoped to return in a day or two. "And then I ſhall alſo hope," ſaid he in a lower key to Mr. Somerville, "to be diſcharged from theſe embarraſſments."

Mrs.

Mrs. Howard prevailed on Fanny to accompany them—and Henry, much to the diſcomfiture of Mr. Howard, rode by the ſide of the carriage.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

AS Lord Norbury drove Mr. Howard with him, the opportunity offered of ſome deciſive converſation relative to the preſent poſture of their affairs. "Has your Lordſhip then fully made up your mind to marry Miſs Somerville?"—

"Moſt certainly."

"You know their late diſappointment—that they will have nothing from the old gentleman?"

"I find," replied his Lordſhip, "that when Gregſon has paid all the

the debts, there will not be more than one ſmall farm in this neighbourhood for Henry, which he has declared he ſhall hold for the general benefit of his family.—You know it is not ſo material to me—and ſure I am, that if ever I ſhould be ſo fortunate as to introduce Fanny to the world, ſhe will not need pecuniary recommendations to ſhed luſtre upon my family. I find her brother a generous young man, formed for a line of life ſuperior to this ruſtic retirement; and I doubt not I ſhall have the pleaſure of ſeeing him fill ſome important ſituation in the field or the cabinet."

"Do you think ſo highly of him?

him? I allow he has merit, but I fear your Lordſhip ſees him through the medium of his ſiſter."

"Time will ſhew that," ſaid Lord Norbury. "If ever man had a heart and a ſpirit that dignified human nature, they are to be found in Henry Somerville. You muſt know him as well as I do—you muſt ſee his merit, and you muſt know that your daughter ſees it. But, my dear Howard, there is ſomething more you muſt know—that nature is irreſiſtible.—You might live in our order of ſociety for a hundred years, and not ſee ſuch an undiſſembled affection as now ſubſiſts between them. I will allow that you

had been made more happy if Henry had been a Peer, or had the expectation of being ſo: but you may certainly bring him into parliament, the army or navy, or the law or the church. Your fortune and family will ſecure him reſpect; and if you wiſh that your daughter ſhould not be ſaid to have married a plebeian, get a ſeat for him, or the promiſe of a ſeat, before the wedding—It is not at all unlikely that old Templeton ſhould die, who repreſents one of my boroughs, and you are at free liberty to bind me to the promiſe of putting him in there!"

"Oh, I thank you very kindly!—But I have not thought favourably enough

enough yet about it, to come to a concluſion of ſo much conſequence."—

" Why ?—You have known their attachment long enough—you cannot need fortune—merit and virtue you have found here in the extreme—influence and power you poſſeſs—you may alſo command what little belongs to me—And I will engage that Henry will do you credit as a ſon-in-law."

" Perhaps he may.—To be ſure, my daughter has not received any other offer."

" I rather think," ſaid My Lord, " ſhe has diſcouraged them.—I ſpeak for myſelf: for the world you know and the ſilly newſpapers have often

put us together: but I never met with any thing in Harriet, but that ſort of diſtant affability which in ſenſible language ſays, 'I like you very well as a man, but I like ſomebody elſe as a lover!'

Mr. Howard was thoughtful; and ſilence enſued for near half a mile.—Lord Norbury knew how to avail himſelf of a favourable moment—"Why," ſaid he, "cannot you decide?—You love to contribute to the happineſs of others—what a full tide of it would flow all round you!—Take Henry apart when we arrive, and ſee whether he is leſs than I have deſcribed. I will venture to ſtake my own wedding upon the reſult."

"Your

" Your Lordſhip is a very ſtrenuous friend to him indeed."

" Not more ſo than Iam to Harriet. You may rely upon it, ſuch an attachment, ſo unfeigned as hers, will never bend to another marriage —I do not believe an offer from the Prince of Wales could tempt her."

" I ſhould hope, my Lord, ſome influence, ſome little authority may be allowed to reſt in my breaſt ?"

" Authority ? my dear friend ! If I know your heart (and that I do know it, is one of the delights of my life), I will be ſworn you are now uſing a tone which you would not exert if you could. How often have you preferred death to the miſery

excited in ſuch caſes—how ſtrongly have I heard you reprobate the folly of ſuch meaſures, which are the great ſprings of that unhappineſs which men in retired life always charge upon us! No, no! I know you too well—the time of your concern and anxiety is not yet arrived."

"No?—Pray when am I to expect it?"

"As ſoon as you have withdrawn your family to town, ſhut the door againſt Henry, and made a final reſolution to ſtab your daughter's peace for ever.—Then, when you ſee her heart ſwoln, her eyes guſhing in ſilent tears, her beauty fading—and all the young men ſee by your hoſpitality

pitality that you are courting them to affect your daughter with a temper ſoured by diſappointment——"

At this moment they drove paſt Armſtrong's inn, whom they ſaw ſitting at the window, and apparently wrangling with great petulance at ſome other perſon in company.

Mr. Howard continued ſilent for ſome time; and as they drove into the park, Lord Norbury aſked him in a cheerful tone the ſubject of his thoughts.

"I can," anſwered he, "do no harm by keeping Henry to dinner, and talking with him." And turning towards the carriage, where the poor anxious heart of Henry was ſuppreſſ-

ing a ſigh to attempt a cheerful fare-well, he requeſted his company with a tone and countenance of leſs aridity than he had ever yet expreſſed to-wards him.

The invitation was as little expect-ed by the reſt of the party, as by himſelf—it cheered the ſpirits of them all; and lighted up the "man-ly ſunnineſs" of Henry's counte-nance with new fervor. Mrs. How-ard—whoſe high opinion of her huſ-band rendered her paſſive to every ſentiment or wiſh that he expreſſed, ſuppreſſing her own under the con-viction of his ſuperior judgment—felt an inſtant ſuffuſion of pleaſure, which ſhe could not reſtrain, while

ſhe

ſhe diſcovered his hand upon her daughter's, which ſhe preſſed with the emotion of undiſſembled gladneſs.

Never was a table ſurrounded with more cheerfulneſs. Harriet caſt many a look of buſy enquiry in her father's face—Lord Norbury rendered himſelf peculiarly agreeable—Mrs. Howard, always elegant, always dignified, never conducted the honours with more charming eaſe and gracefulneſs than at this moment. The difference was ſo evident, that the ſervants were led to believe that the wedding had actually taken place, though they could diſcover no ſigns of it.—Mr. Howard partook of the general delight without conceiving that it

aroſe from the expectation he had raiſed.

The ladies had not long retired before Mr. Howard introduced a few topics of public news, in order to obſerve how they affected Henry's mind:—and he was very well pleaſed to find that he had not left the cultivation of that garden entirely for the other. Henry's leiſure had been occupied chiefly by hiſtory and politics, with ſome good tranſlations of claſſical authors; and he had generally acquainted himſelf with the meaſures of the times through the medium of news-papers; and he was in the conſtant practice of reading the debates in both houſes of the Senate, and of

hearing

hearing his father's, and making his own comments upon them. Thus, though he would be deemed by the corps diplomatique but a ſecondary politican, yet he knew enough of the world as it paſſed, to form an opinion, to underſtand the converſations he heard, and to bear a part in the praiſe or diſpraiſe of men and meaſures.

The ſervant announced to Lord Norbury, that a gentleman waited on him upon buſineſs, who declined ſending in his name, having a letter to deliver into his own hand—and added, that he believed he was Mr. Writhe, the ſurgeon.

"I'll be ſworn he comes from Armſtrong!" ſaid My Lord. "Pray let him know I will wait on him directly."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

WHEN they were together, Mr. Writhe, after a long liſt of apologies, and twenty ſilly ſmiles, covered with a moiſt damp upon his forehead, and a fluſh upon his face, and having twiſted his long meagre perſon into numberleſs attitudes, produced a letter, which he begged with all humility to preſent to his Lordſhip, hoping no offence might be taken to him, who had indeed done and ſaid all that he could to prevent the affray.

"I hope,

"I hope, ſir, your patient is recovering?"

"Oh yes! my Lord. Thank ye, my Lord—he's doing vaſtly well, my Lord. But to be ſure, it has been, my Lord, a very bad caſe, and required all my ſkill and addreſs, my Lord. I aſſure your Lordſhip, if it had happened in any other part of the county, I don't know, my Lord, though I ſay it myſelf, and your Lordſhip knows we profeſſional men cannot help ſpeaking ſomething about ourſelves now and then—I don't know but it might have been fatal."

Conceive a tall man of about the height and breadth of an oak-ſapling

with

with a cluſter of leaves left at the top, which his wig very much reſembled in ſhape and ſize—clad in a dark-brown full-dreſs coat, that had been preſerved in Monmouth-ſtreet ever ſince the wars of Queen Ann, with a waiſtcoat of tarniſhed gold tiſſue, whoſe pockets reached half down to his knee, with black velvet breeches, high-topped boots, and ruffles which covered his knuckles —conceive ſuch a figure! ſent to preſent a challenge to a high-ſpirited faſhionable nobleman, and waiting with the utmoſt humility for his Lordſhip's gracious condeſcenſion to accept the honour of having his brains blown out!

As

As ſoon as his Lordſhip had read the challenge, he aſked Mr. Writhe if he was to be Mr. Armſtrong's ſecond; to which he bowed in the affirmative. Deſiring to have the pleaſure of introducing him to Mr. Howard, he then led the way to the dining-room, where he found his two friends in converſation, of which, from their countenances, he was glad to form the moſt favourable conjectures.

"Give me leave, gentlemen," ſaid his Lordſhip, ſmiling as he entered, "to introduce to you Mr. Writhe, who brings me tidings of Mr. Armſtrong, whoſe recovery is now certain, owing to his extraordinary ſkill."

"Oh,

"Oh, your Lordſhip is very kind! —But indeed, when I ſtudied at Leyden——"

"Have you been at Leyden, ſir?" ſaid Mr. Howard.

"I meant Edinburgh, ſir!—My Lord—gentlemen, your very obedient humble ſervant."

"Pray, ſir," ſaid My Lord, "are they very ſtrict in their examinations at Edinburgh?"

"At Edinburgh, my Lord? Oh, dear! I meant the college—Yes, my Lord, very ſtrict indeed. When I paſſed my examination, I was a very young man."

"You muſt have ſeen great practice ſince that time, ſir."

This

This was an unfortunate remark; for it being by no means clear, whether he ever ſtudied at all, or was ever examined at all, he preferred getting rid of ſo embarraſſing a queſtion, by taking refuge under the ſhelter of this remark; and during the ſpace of ten minutes' uninterrupted volubility, which for exquiſiteneſs of tone, delicacy of ſound, and tranquillity of motion, may well be compared to one of the patent alarms, or to a watch daſhed on the ground from ſome lady's ſide in the middle of a ball-room, he entertained his aſtoniſhed hearers with the wounds, bruiſes and putrifying ſores of all the men and the maids, the ploughboys, carmen,

carmen, threſhers, and old Philpots, within twenty miles' circumference of this ſpider of medicine. Scarcely could a child cry, but he propoſed ſome ſpecific—not a chin had a ſcrape to the quick on a Saturday-night, but the barber had a wink to ſend for doctor Writhe. In ſhort, the deſſert upon the table had in a very few minutes imbibed in imagination ſome of the refuſe of the doctor's operations; and, as it could not be poſſible that his ſkill ſhould keep pace with his tongue, and as the cauſe of his viſit was rather more intereſting, Lord Norbury ventured to turn the torrent of the doctor's eloquence to a different channel.

" You

"You ſay, ſir, that Armſtrong is recovered?"

"Sir," replied Æſculapius, "when he ſent for me, I was making a bolus for a bad eye."

"A bolus for a bad eye!" ſaid Mr. Howard, with ſome ſurpriſe.

"Pardon me, honoured ſir—there are various ſorts of boluſes—firſt, that which is requiſite in caſes of——." The doctor here found he had a five-barred gate in his way; and that before he could leap it, it would be neceſſary to ſhorten his ſtirrups.—"But, gentlemen, theſe ſcientific enquiries muſt be very unintereſting to you."

"Rather ſo, indeed," ſaid Henry:—"But, pray, ſir——"

"Sir,

"Sir, I found the patient very anxious and out of ſpirits: but I told him when I firſt ſaw him, that he would do very well. He thought fit to ſend for a great gentleman from London at a great expence, becauſe great men are always valued by the amount of their charges—and ſo when he came, he told him the ſame as I did, and made a ſlight alteration in the plaiſter, took his fee—a cool fifty, ſir, a cool fifty—blundered into his poſt-chaiſe, and was off again!"

"It muſt needs be a valuable alteration this?" ſaid Henry.

"Oh, nothing!" replied Mr. Writhe; "only he took off my cauſtic,

tic, and put on diachylon and cerate, and ſome ſettings—things that we profeſſional men underſtand, but we do not frighten our patients about."

This excited a general laugh, which raiſed this ſkilful body of phyſic from his chair; and ſmoothing his face to a grave reſpect, he begged pardon for having preſumed to talk ſo freely.

" Tell Mr. Armſtrong, that I am ready to meet him," ſaid Lord Norbury: " but that I have received a letter from town, acquainting me of the extreme ſituation of Sir Francis Bloom, and I had deſigned to ſet off this very afternoon, that I might ſee him if poſſible before his death."

" He

" He is dead, ſir!" ſaid Mr. Writhe: " he is dead, ſir!——When I was leaving Mr. Armſtrong juſt now, an expreſs arrived, and he opened the letter before I came away."

" Can this be true?" ſaid Henry.

" True, ſir!—true, ſir!——I don't underſtand your truth, ſir!—Mr. Somerville!"

" No: upon my word, I don't think you do, ſir," ſaid Henry.

The doctor roſe again from his chair.

" Pray, ſir, ſit down," ſaid Lord Norbury: " whom did the letter come from?"

" From—from—my Lord—Oh I recollect

recollect—it was ſigned by a 'Squire John Blunt."

"Then it is too true," added his Lordſhip. "Poor Frank!—he has outlived his honour and his name!"

"Pray, ſir," ſaid Henry, "was this the firſt news of his death? Did not Mr. Armſtrong know of his being ill?"

"Yes, very well; for Sir Francis ſent him but a day or two ago a ſilver-hilted ſword and a brace of piſtols, as the laſt preſent, the poor gentleman wrote word, he ſhould ever make him—but that, as he had made him a promiſe, he complied, though much againſt his mind. I

ſuppoſe by that he felt himſelf going. ——Oh, ſir, 'tis a fine thing for a man to remember his friends in his laſt moments!"

Henry roſe from his ſeat, unable to reſtrain his indignation, and paced two or three times haſtily acroſs the room.

"Then, my Lord," ſaid Mr. Writhe, "I am to be the meſſenger of your determination to meet Mr. Armſtrong? What a cruel thing it is that great gentlemen will not ſettle a more eaſy way of adjuſting their quarrels!"

Mr. Writhe, having practiſed his uſual number of unnatural twiſts, at length found his way to the door,

to the no ſmall ſatisfaction of all preſent.

The meeting was fixed for the following day. It was agreed that Armſtrong ſhould be deſired to chooſe his weapon, the better to detect his villainy—and that Henry ſhould be his Lordſhip's ſecond—but that nothing ſhould be ſaid to either of the families.

"How in the name of common ſenſe," ſaid his Lordſhip, "came Armſtrong to take up with ſuch a ſecond as this Writhe?"

"Evidently," replied Henry, "becauſe he could procure no other.—His friends are all engaged—or on a journey—or, may be, ſleeping.—Armſtrong

ſtrong may now make a great bluſter —but I will be ſhot if we do not find him a coward. He is a mere bully, roaring in ſafety; and when oppoſed, he will truckle, and ſhew his weak unmanly vices.——I remember in Potter's Æſchylus ſome lines in the play of Agamemnon, which preciſely deſcribe the heart of this wretch:——

Few have the fortitude of ſoul to honour
A friend's ſucceſs, without a touch of envy;
For that malignant paſſion to the heart
Cleaves cloſe, and with a double burden loads
The man infected with it: firſt he feels
In all their weight his own calamities,
Then ſighs to ſee the happineſs of others.

CHAP. XXIX.

MR. Howard having withdrawn for a few minutes to his ſtudy, Lord Norbury enquired of Henry how he reliſhed his viſit, as it was ſome time ſince he had been there laſt.

Henry expreſſed his great ſatiſfaction at Mr. Howard's treatment of him; and ſaid he never had accuſtomed himſelf to talk to him ſo much upon politics and the affairs of the country—that he (Henry) had learnt ſeveral matters from him relative to loans and the funded property, which he never yet underſtood.

"I am

"I am inclined to think favourably of all this," added he; "but I do not quite ſee the reaſon for it, unleſs it was to prevent my ſpeaking to him, while alone, on a more intereſting ſubject—though, if he knew me better, he would not find ſuch precautions neceſſary; for, as he has given me his determination already, I am reſolved not to diſturb the tranquillity of his mind, till I ſee more favourable grounds."

"I have," ſaid Lord Norbury, "availed myſelf of this morning's ride, to urge every thing on the ſubject which I could ſuggeſt: and though he has been much averſe to any union leſs than that of nobility,

without any objection to you; yet I think I have put the caſe in two or three points of view, which obviate ſome of his difficulties, and tend to ſhorten the proſpect;—and I doubt not that your merit and talents will be a material cauſe of promoting your wiſhes."

Thus Henry's joys approached towards their meridian: thus his obligations exceeded any efforts of acknowledgments—and thus Lord Norbury began to ſhew his love for Fanny, by becoming the avowed friend of her brother.

"I think," ſaid his Lordſhip, "we cannot doubt of the death of poor Frank, and therefore I ſhall not ſet

off to town; and as you will be with me to-morrow, keep a watchful eye upon Armſtrong, ſo as to interfere only at the juſt moment. Uſe no violence yourſelf, but preſerve a ſteady air—ſay little—but examine the weapons."

"You will excuſe what I have been doing," ſaid Mr. Howard, as he entered the room—"I have ſent a few lines to Mr. Keen our ſurgeon, to deſire him to attend, leſt any unfair play ſhould be uſed. I think it a great condeſcenſion, and rather wrong, that you ſhould accept a challenge from a man ſo unfit to put himſelf on your Lordſhip's ground; but that is your own af-

fair, not mine.—We will however, if you pleaſe, be of your party at ſome convenient diſtance."

Having thus adjuſted every thing, they joined the ladies, who were on that evening without company.—Henry fully reflected upon his promiſe to his mother, and his father's well-founded reaſoning againſt duelling—he could not preſume to urge them to Lord Norbury, but he could, and did reſolve to reſtrain his own indignation.

His Lordſhip was charmed to ſee that manly ſpirit ſo juſtly diſplayed; and rendered the more intereſting, from his uniting in it the feelings of a brother and a friend!

" My

" My worthy Henry," ſaid he, as they ſeparated from the ladies in the garden, " I have but little anxiety about the event of this rencontre; for perhaps it will end in a ſeaſonable chaſtiſement of that ſcoundrel: but, as none of us can tell with certainty what ſuch a meeting may produce, and he has long been practiſed in all the ways of the town, I have one charge to lay upon you. Take this pocket-book; it contains a paper, which, if I ſhould drop, your ſiſter and yourſelf will firſt of all open together.—Let not this excite your curioſity—I have there expreſſed only a few ſentiments of a very ſin-

cere affection, which, if I ſhould ſurvive, it will be my firſt pride to prove."

Henry's heart was full.

"Does your Lordſhip then really think us worthy of ſuch confidence?"

"Moſt truly, Henry—I ſhould be ungrateful, to be indifferent to either of you. Truſt me, our future days, my very excellent friend, ſhall give you the ampleſt teſtimonies of my eſteem!"

While the coffee was ſerving, Mr. Howard called upon Harriet for her harp. She played and ſung, in a moſt captivating manner, an air lately ſet to muſic, and a little altered from a favourite poet:—

Ah

Ah tell me, Phedria! tell me why,
When ſummoning your pride, you try
To meet her looks with cool neglect,
Or croſs her walk with ſlight reſpect
(For ſo is falſehood beſt repaid);
Whence do your cheeks reluctant glow?
Why is your ſtruggling tongue ſo ſlow?
What means that ſullenneſs of brow?
As if with all her broken vow
You ſtrove the fair apoſtate to upbraid!

Henry liſtened with mute attention, drinking deep draughts of conſolation to the ſoul, in thus hearing a leſſon from Harriet, that ſome others in the room might profit by as well as himſelf.

Fanny, whoſe texture was ſenſation the moſt refined, and, like the beauty of her form, all its component come-

lineſs of parts melted as it were into each other, in whom ſentiment like her complexion clear and bright was diverſified by a copious and precious mixture of charms, felt with unmingled truth the application of this little air to her own ſtory—wondering, as well as the poet, at all the points he urged, yet taking an intereſt in the object not to be concealed.—Henry took it as a piece of raillery, and put it down to a good account, nothing doubting that he was now freely admitted by the ſanction of her father, and that this day would be the auſpicious æra of his future happineſs. He ſtrove to diveſt his mind of the fears which had op-

preſſed

preſſed him, to aſſume an air of more avowed attention, to mark his conduct with an addreſs peculiarly appropriate to her—in ſhort, to ſhew that he really was the lover.

Lord Norbury ſmothered his inclination to rally her upon the points of her ſong, though he aſcribed it to the pleaſantry which always accompanied her, and now engaged ſo agreeably in the ſervice of her friend.

Mr. Howard was perhaps the only one who felt it too much—he did not think the time yet come, nor would he allow himſelf yet to think it ever would come, for his daughter to flatter either Henry or herſelf with the, proſpect of a certainty

tainty which he ſtill, though ſomewhat reluctantly too, held at conſiderable diſtance——and was obſerved, while ſhe was playing an adagio movement in one of Haydn's concertos, to look over her muſic, and put this very air ſilently into his pocket.—The fact was, he ſuſpected it had been manuſcript.

The reſt of the afternoon was a feaſt of every ſentiment of the human heart—the bleſſed harmony of concord and affection ſpread her favouring ſmiles over every countenance, and diffuſed the delicious luxury of univerſal love into every breaſt. Mr. Howard caught the rich contagion, drank as deep as

any

any one of this peerleſs ſpring, and irreſiſtibly found his own heart beat in uniſon with thoſe who in great meaſure depended all upon him for their die of happineſs or woe!

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

HENRY, having taken a reluctant leave of ſo delightful a circle, and having got into the high road on his return home, paſſed a man who he thought looked at him very hardly, to diſcover his perſon if poſſible in the dark—and in a few minutes heard him ſlacken his pace, ſtop—and at length turn his horſe, and put on a briſk trot to overtake him.

Henry, whoſe courage never forſook him,

——(He, whom toil has brac'd, or manly play,
Has light as air each limb, each thought as clear as day)

and unarmed with any other weapon than his native ſtrength and vigour, preſerved his pace, till a voice called him by his name, and begged him to ſtop, in a tone not much given to excite alarm. As ſoon as they had met, he diſcovered mounted on a horſe which the famed Roſinante of La Mancha would have ſurpaſſed in fleſh and ſpirit, the ſkilful Mr. Writhe.

He entreated pardon for thus interrupting his journey; but he had been ſent to find him by his patient, who, for ſome cauſe which he could not develop, had inſiſted on ſeeing Henry for a ſhort time this evening; and, as it was now between nine and ten o'clock, and the meeting was to

be

be held the next day, he had no time to ſpare. "For, poor gentleman!" added this ſagacious ſecond, "he is in ſo bad a ſtate of anxiety, that he ſits for many minutes thinking and looking over a few papers he has with him, till the ſweat drops like blood from his forehead; and his eyes roll like a patient in a delirium. —I once," ſaid he, "had a patient—"

"A plague o' your patient!" interrupted Henry, "what have I to do with all this?—to what end am I deſired to ſee him? [ſuſpecting ſome baſe deſign]—Has he any body with him?"

"No, ſir—only the landlord and your moſt obedient."

As they rode on together, Henry learned

learned from his companion, that Armſtrong's evil genius haunted him with the plagues of conſcience, and the certain fears of death—that he had made a ſhort will, had written to two friends, who had excuſed themſelves from attending him—had curſed his own folly for ſending for a ſurgeon from London, who had not effected his cure—and that he had left him reading a letter he had juſt received by expreſs, which had ſo diſturbed him, that he almoſt deſpaired of ſeeing his patient alive at his return.

As ſoon as they arrived at the inn, the landlord met him at the door, and told him that his gueſt

was

was very bad.—When he was uſhered into the room, he found this man diſarmed of every principle that could reſcue him from deſtruction. —plunged into inextricable toils, ſurrounded with the horrors of a terrified imagination—ſhrinking at death, but reſolved upon the grave.

Folly had in his jocund hours rattled her bells in his ears, and flattered him with the vain deceit that he ſhould never be caſt down.—Ignorance and error, the joint nurſes of immorality and ingratitude, had encouraged his giddy career, and made him diſbelieve a God. Atheiſm, with her companion Annihilation in her train, had buoyed him up, in the

hurry

hurry of luxurious pleaſure and the riot of unprincipled licentiouſneſs, to a falſe conviction, that a future account was a fable of ſuperſtitious mythology, and the conſequent reward or puniſhment the bugbear and cant of fanaticiſm, calculated only to alarm the unwary, and draw aſide the unſuſpecting credulity of childhood, or the gaping aſtoniſhment of the grovelling multitude.— With ſuch ſentiments of ſerious things, Armſtrong had never been accuſtomed to reſtrain his indulgence, or to caſt one look forward beyond the grave.

The time was now come, when Deſpondency had caſt her ſable mantle round

round him—when Deſpair had ſeized upon his indiſcretions, and terrified Expectation had led him to the precipice, into which he was ready to plunge, without a ray of hope to leſſen his fall, without a gleam of virtue to meaſure back his ſteps, without one ſtar from all the expanſe of heaven to lead him upward for conſolation!

Loſt to himſelf, loſt to the world, loſt to Heaven, Deſpair marked him for her own; and eternal Shame, gaping wide her terrific jaws, impatient for her prey, waited for the ſwift moment of his diſſolution! Oh! ye, whom falſe philoſophy, and the conceits of idle fame; whom

the

the labouring brain of ſomething little leſs than phrenſy fires—who yield to the ungrateful voice of Sin, and, ruſhing from the ſolace of Religion and her ſacred beams, plunge into the darkneſs of Infidelity! arreſt your fantaſtic flight—ſearch out, and ſhew us if you find it, ſome more certain light which will lead your feeble undulating ſteps when nature trembles on the breath, and your unſteady eye ſwims in the medium of departing life! Shew us then your ſubſtitute for hope; but if you find it not, ſtop your raſh folly while it is in time, and reflect on the exit of the wicked Armſtrong!

Such was the ſtate in which this hero

hero of Atheiſm was preparing to finiſh his earthly courſe; deep ſunk in ruin irretrievable!

"Sir," ſaid he to Henry, "excuſe a wretch, who is now reduced to beg from your hands the little, very little, peace which his laſt moments can afford him——I have too many affairs in this world to adjuſt, and therefore I ruſh to another, where I hope for reſt—and yet I have wronged thoſe who may demand——but I muſt ſhorten explanations; for the time does not allow——"

"My time is yours," ſaid Henry.

"Ah! ſir, you have time before hand, mine is paſt, I dare not look forward—and what is paſt is too

painful

painful to review.—I ſhall very ſoon excuſe the trouble I have raſhly given to Lord Norbury and yourſelf—Take this paper, it contains the little reparation that lies in my power—Your indignation is juſt—I ſee that you diſdain to receive from my hands any acknowledgment but death—in this you will ſoon be ſatisfied. I have however ſaved you this pride of heart; for I have returned to Mr. Gregſon all your grandfather's ſecurities cancelled, and thus, in ſpite of fate and honour, you muſt be his only heir—Thus I die content."

"Do I live," ſaid Henry, "and hear rightly?—You die! By what means?—How, do you thus dread

to die, and yet call upon death?—Never ſhall you die, while I can prevent——'Tis true, I ſhall meet you to-morrow, but I would not have ſuffered either of you to fight."

"Had I known that—but, no—I have other accounts—All is well!—It muſt be ſo!"

"By Heaven, this ſhall never be!—Would you die thus like a coward running from his poſt; you that called another to the field?—If you have done wrong, will death aſſiſt your repentance? If you have offended Heaven, will ſelf-murder ſmooth the brow of eternal juſtice? or, if you have cauſed affliction, or done the deeds of blackeſt perfidy on earth,

earth, will this ſecure a better fame? —Have you never received the bleſſings of life?—Will this prove your gratitude? You ſpoke juſt now of daring not to look forward—Miſtaken wretch, will thy own ſword point thee a fairer road?"

"Oh! ſpare me—ſpare me," cried he, in a hollow ſhivering tone—"'tis too late to argue—my brain is already half on fire!—Oh, that pang—gracious Providence!——Oh!—"

Henry, in the deepeſt conſternation, rung the bell with much violence—The landlord and his wife, who had liſtened at the door, inſtantly entered—and before they could ſend for Mr. Writhe, Armſtrong breathed a deep

ſigh, rolled his half-cloſing eyes, ſtretched himſelf in violent agonies, and at length expired.

Henry ſtarted with aſtoniſhment and dread—not that death could alarm a ſoul virtuous as his, but that it ſhould firſt make its appearance to his ſight accompanied with ſo much terror.

As ſoon as Mr. Writhe came in, he ſoon pronounced that the death was occaſioned by a copious draught of ſome liquid in which arſenic was mixed. But as none had been bought at his houſe, he was clearly exculpated from cenſure; and, after ſome further enquiry, a paper was found in the cloſet with the remains of ſome

arſenic,

arſenic, from which it was ſuppoſed he had filled up the meaſure of his deſpair.

Henry ordered every care to be taken of the body, and proceeded to ſeal up the articles of property that belonged to the deceaſed. The hoſt, who, aided by his jolly wife, had no ſmall grain of curioſity, having firſt expreſſed to Henry his hope, that he would take care of his bill, and of the great attention they had paid to Mr. Armſtrong, proceeded to acquaint him of a few of the ſtrange occurrences that had happened ſince he had taken up his abode at their inn—and when the bill was produced, it appeared that brandy and

large ſupplies of cordials, commonly called *comfort*, had very eſſentially contributed to ſend their miſerable gueſt rather ſpeedily to his journey's end:—that he had once been in a violent rage at a man, who had brought a brace of piſtols not of the right ſort—that he was made very happy one evening by a preſent from Sir Francis Bloom of a ſword and piſtols—and that they had heard him conſult Writhe on probing a wound made by that ſword; and that this was the only time he was calm and quiet ſince he had been there, though they had done all in their power; ——but that he ſoon ſunk back into his uſual angry manner—full of pain,

pain, diſſatisfaction, and violence—often roaring out vengeance againſt Lord Norbury, and then regretting it, and ſaying he had done him wrong—in ſhort, that he often ſhewed the turbulence of a madman.

When Mr. Writhe heard the landlord mention the ſword, he made a ſign to him to ſtop, and ſtrove to lead their attention to ſome of the funeral arrangements. But Henry had, ever ſince the letter to Lord Norbury, reſolved to make that the object of particular inveſtigation; and, therefore, taking it up from the table, turned to Mr. Writhe, and with a firm tone demanded if he ever ſaw it before.

"Saw it, ſir? Yes, I—I—this

ſword, ſir? Yes, I—I—perhaps I may, ſir."

"Then I take it that you have, ſir!—Now, pray when did you ſee it?" drawing it from the ſcabbard.

"Oh! Lord! ſir," exclaimed Writhe, lifting up both his hands, "I had no concern in it, ſir, I do aſſure you——I ſaw it but the day before yeſterday, ſir."

"And then you ſaw this flat point of it, and then you was conſulted how it would break in the body, and could not be extracted without excruciating torment, or ſomething next to death—or not at all?"——

"Indeed, ſir—your honour—Mr. Henry!"—

"Pray

"Pray now tell me, did not Mr. Armſtrong deſign to chooſe this weapon?"—

"Indeed, ſir! I can't tell."

"Do not add falſehood to thy ſhame, thou mean ſoul of villainy! Tell me plainly, or I will make thee the public ſcorn of all the country round."—

"I believe he did, ſir."

"And you, knowing this, deſigned to be his ſecond? Armſtrong has ſaved thee from the hand of juſtice! Fly from the ſight of day—never ſhew thyſelf again—but go to ſome deep receſs in yonder foreſt, and waſte out the remnant of thy days in bitter repentance!"

Henry ſhewed him to the door—and that very hour this doughty knight of the lancet took French leave of his ſhop and his neighbourhood for ever.

It was now too late in the night to return to the Park—Henry therefore put the paper into his pocket, which Armſtrong had given him, without reading it; and left a note with ſtrict directions that it ſhould be carried to Lord Norbury, by five o'clock the next morning—promiſing to be with him by breakfaſt-time.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

HENRY's family had long ſince retired to reſt, when he arrived at home; he therefore ſpent the chief part of the night in reading over the paper in queſtion, and ruminating on the happy termination of the embarraſſment into which they might have fallen if Armſtrong had ſtood firm at his poſt. The paper was nothing more than a corroboration of what he had done in ſending back the cancelled ſecurities to Mr. Gregſon——but expreſſing in the cloſe of it, that though he had, by ſending

the challenge, kept up appearances to the laſt, he had not been able to perſuade himſelf to add Lord Norbury's death to his other crimes—a man, whom he dared not meet.

It afterwards proved that Armſtrong had advanced great part of the annuities to old Somerville, and had purchaſed the debts contracted for the others, ſo that he was poſſeſſed of the entire right to the manor and eſtates, which had been veſted for the repayment of the money borrowed. Theſe, in the agony of his remorſe, he re-inveſted in Mr. Somerville's family—and having left no heirs, Henry had no one to contend with.

He

He roſe early in the morning, and leaving a ſhort meſſage for his father, that Armſtrong was dead, and that he was going to breakfaſt at the Park, ſet off to fulfil his engagement.

It was one of thoſe mornings in October, clear and freſh, which renders the roſy hue of health more ruddy, and all the face of nature jocund and gay;—the birds chanted their morning oriſons, and the opening glories of the day united to awaken his gratitude, and to form his mind to a ſympathetic delight, of which the preſent poſture of his affairs rendered him peculiarly ſuſceptible.

He arrived within an hour after the

the meſſenger he had ordered from the inn, and, deſiring to be announced to Lord Norbury, was immediately admitted to his chamber.

As ſoon as he had related the particulars of Armſtrong's death, and ſhewn him the paper in queſtion, his Lordſhip congratulated him; but obſerved, that, as ſuicide is generally deemed a preſumptive proof of inſanity, the whole of his property might have fallen to the Crown, if he had not taken the precaution of previouſly ſurrendering his claim in the formal manner alluded to. "And now then," added he, "nothing ſeems to obſtruct our progreſs.—I have laſt night lent a finiſhing hand

to

to your own affairs, by prevailing on Mr. Howard to ſuſpend his determination—and now that you are poſſeſſed of ſo ample a fortune, I think he will be puzzled to find another objection."

"But, your Lordſhip recollects I have promiſed the whole to my family, and that *muſt* be fulfilled."

"So it ſhall, Henry, and I will hope to be allowed to ſhew you a plan to fulfil it."

"Here is your Lordſhip's pocket-book, as you gave it me."

"Keep it, Henry—and inſtead of reading its contents with Fanny, tell Mary ſhe muſt now ſupply her ſiſter's place——for, as to Fanny, Mr. Greg-

ſon

ſon ſhall make her a ſettlement on my eſtates, which will not render the pocket-book quite ſo neceſſary to her. Your worthy parents live at eaſe by their own prudence—and though I could not offend their delicacy ſo much as to obtrude acknowledgements upon them, they will know that they can at all times command the ſervices of a ſon-in-law, as well as a ſon, and perhaps they will find as hearty a welcome at Norbury Park as at your manor."

"My ſpirits ſwim in ſtrange confuſion," ſaid Henry—"ſo rapid a reverſe of fortune, and your Lordſhip's goodneſs, awaken my deepeſt ſenſe of gratitude—Oh, My Lord!

where

where are the proper words that ſhould ſhew you what I feel? I am not accuſtomed to ſpeak inſincerely, and I find what I feel cannot be expreſſed!"

"My worthy friend," replied Lord Norbury, "I ſhall delight to call you brother, and to form plans together for our mutual happineſs —but why ſhould you ſtill ſeem anxious?"

"Becauſe, if Mr. Howard ſhould ſtill decline——"

"Leave that to me, my excellent friend. Let us prepare for breakfaſt. Mr. Howard will ſoon make his appearance, for you know he ſaid he would join our party: and if I judge rightly,

rightly, Mr. Keen is now driving up the avenue: we muſt contrive to keep him here for a day or two, that he may aſſiſt in a different ceremony."

Mr. Howard and Mr. Keen entered Lord Norbury's dreſſing-room together, and both joined in very cordial congratulations at meeting in a ſituation ſo much more agreeable than what they had prepared for.

His Lordſhip left Henry in the chamber, in order to go and receive them.

"I have paſſed the greater part of the night in thinking upon this rencontre," ſaid Mr. Howard, addreſſing himſelf to Lord Norbury,

as

as he took him by the hand, " and, if it had ended without miſchief, as ſo many of them do, of the criſis to which it would have brought both your own and my daughter's ſituation :—and though I muſt freely ſay, it would have pleaſed me better that ſhe had ſet her mind upon a man of more rank and fortune; yet, as the poung people's minds ſeem ſo inſeparable, and as Henry ſeems to poſſeſs a nobly generous diſpoſition, and has a good counſel in your Lordſhip, I give you full authority to tell him that I no longer ſtand between them."

" Believe me," ſaid Lord Norbury, " my dear Charles, you are by this ſecuring the happineſs of

us

us all. And now let me inform you, that Armſtrong, ſtung to the quick at having fleeced old Somerville in the money tranſactions between them, has ſurrendered up all his ſecurities, and voluntarily inveſted Henry with the manor and eſtates unincumbered: your daughter will thus have a jointure ſuitable to her, and her huſband will bear a rank in ſociety that will not diſgrace you."

"Wonderful indeed!" ſaid Mr. Howard—"This hour ſhall begin our general joy.—But your Lordſhip has not even yet made your ſpeech—I ſuppoſe you have ſecured your election."

He left him in haſte to communi-

cate

cate theſe glad tidings to Mrs. Howard—but prevented her from ſpreading the tale further, that the lovers might relate their own ſtory.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

HENRY, who had unavoidably heard this converſation, came out from the chamber, with intent to ruſh into the arms of Mr. Howard: but he was gone, and had ſhut the door after him. He therefore left Lord Norbury with Mr. Keen, and went into the breakfaſt-room, muſing upon the ſtrange and ſudden alteration and advancement of his fortunes. He was loſt in the delicious reflection on the gratification of haſtening as ſoon as poſſible to pour into his pa-

rent's liſtening ears this hiſtory of delight.—" It cannot be," ſaid he to himſelf: " By what title am I thus favoured?—A dream ſnatches me from the world, and in my vain fancy I cope with mountains and conquer ſtorms—Surely another moment approaches when all my joys will be loſt!—Do I live to hear that Harriet ſhall be mine? that I have wherewith to become an equal to many of her admirers?—Do I feel the warm embrace of another father, the man who but yeſterday killed me with his frown?—Why do I gaze thus on myſelf?—I ſeem to wear a garb I never touched before!—Oh! it cannot be;—this deluſion is to burſt

burſt with redoubled horror upon me!—But then let it burſt—I wait its fury, for in the ſtorm I may at leaſt die with Harriet's name upon my lips!"

Mr. Howard, followed by his lady, led his daughter by the hand into the room, and without ſpeaking, for his heart was full, preſented her to Henry. Aſtoniſhed by the delirium of his joy, he ſtarted for a moment —and then flew with extended arms, and overflowing heart, and claſped her to his breaſt, "My life—my Harriet!" he exclaimed—and thrice preſſed her to his beating heart.—It was a moment, in which the guſhing ſoul, melting in delicious drops of

animated

animated nature, diſſolved in holy tears!

Mr. Howard embraced them both without being able to ſpeak; but, preſſing their hands together, at length in a tremulous voice, caſting his eyes firſt upon them, and then upward to heaven: "My deareſt children, be happy!"—And then turning to his wife, he poured the ſtream of his feeling heart into her affectionate boſom.

Henry, who now ſaw his dream realized, and that he was allowed to look on Harriet in a nearer view than before, ſtill kept her hand in his, and ſtill nouriſhed the

charm of preſſing it frequently to his lips. Her tender boſom beat in uniſon with his—her ſoftened eye, ſparkling like a ſun-beam upon the early dew, gained momentary rays from the ſame ſource which animated his—and ſcarcely reſtraining himſelf from catching her again to his boſom, he claſped his hands, and gave a free vent to his joy by a flood of ſilent manly tears.

As they approached the window, they diſcovered Lord Norbury pleading his own cauſe with Fanny, whom he ſoon after led into the room. The charming ſuffuſion on her countenance, mingled with the tender tu-

mult

mult of her boſom, and the lively ray of unadulterate pleaſure, which added new life to her perſon, needed but little explanation of thoſe feelings which her downcaſt modeſty ſtrove in vain to conceal.

"Allow me, my dear friends," ſaid his Lordſhip, as he entered the room, "to ſay, that Miſs Somerville has made me the happieſt of men —and has permitted me to hope that her friend Harriet will cement their preſent friendſhip, by making one day the ſource of future happineſs to both their families."

"Let us all join," ſaid Mr. Howard, "in an early viſit this morning

to

to Mr. and Mrs. Somerville—we have all much to relate to them, and I know that their excellent hearts will join in our general joy."

THE END.

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